

Children in Soviet Russia

To the memory of A. L.

CHILDREN IN SOVIET RUSSIA

by
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Preface



Every incident in this book is founded on actual fact, though the names of the people in it have been changed and the chronological order has not been maintained throughout.

It might be said that the school in which I worked, being small and rather special, was not typical of Moscow schools. Such a statement would be incorrect. Our school, it is true, had certain problems to tackle which other schools may never have dreamt of, but apart from that, it was run along the normal lines of a Soviet school, used the same books and syllabuses, struggled for the same standards, and came under the same education authorities.

In discussing or examining the educational system in the U.S.S.R., one must not be biased by preconceived notions. I have met the argument—‘But we have gone beyond that in our school,’ or, ‘That is not my idea of how to run schools’. One’s personal opinion is completely unimportant in this connection. What must be realized is the vital fact that the best type of universal education possible is being worked out for everyone in the Soviet Union, that this system is expanding and developing with every year of development in the U.S.S.R., that the actual workers in the educational field, by their progress and experience, are raising the general standard of teaching and introducing better methods and ideas into the whole school system.

Another important fact to remember is that the Soviet school must supply the direct needs of the society of which it is a part. As society develops and its demands alter, the

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school must alter accordingly, its function still being to supply the needs of society, to prepare citizens of that society who will be able to develop it still further along its path to Socialism and Communism.

The only acknowledgement that I wish to make here is to the freedom with which I lived and worked in the Soviet Union. Although I was controlled in my work like any other Soviet teacher, and had to teach according to the fixed syllabus in my subject, I was encouraged to experiment in methods of teaching and to use my initiative in the organization of my time. I felt throughout my experience in Moscow that I was being judged for what I was worth, as was every other teacher. Good work was appreciated and encouraged; poor work was always criticized and disapproved of in such a way as to ensure its speedy elimination. The names of good teachers were known and honoured in the teaching world.

The Soviet school is the most dynamic in the world. It is turning out well-informed, capable students, equipped to tackle life and able to continue their studies in whichever direction they wish.

D.L.

Moscow-London, 1938-1942

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CHAPTER ONE

I Start Work



I came to the U.S.S.R. late in 1933, with the intention of staying a short time and of making a special study of the Soviet educational system. I visited many schools in Moscow and spoke to many Soviet educationalists, but all the time I felt that, in spite of the interesting facts and figures that I was acquiring, I was nevertheless getting a view only from the outside and not seeing a complete picture. Even spending an entire day in a school was not the same, and so it was that the idea of staying in Moscow for a time, and actually working in a school, began to mature in my mind, and I decided to make enquiries immediately.

'Why don't you go to the Anglo-American School?' suggested a friend. 'They are in need of teachers and I am sure you would enjoy working there.'

'But I want to work in a real Soviet school,' I said. 'Surely this is a school for foreigners and therefore not typical?'

'It is a real Soviet school,' was the reply. 'Anyway, go and see it and judge for yourself.' And she gave me the address.

The next day I went over to the Anglo-American school. I thought that in any case it would be interesting to see it. The building was a typical two-storied old Moscow house, one of those which had formerly belonged to a rich merchant. It had large windows and a pleasant courtyard full of trees. This had been turned into a skating rink by flooding and several children were skating about among the trees.

I went in and asked if I might see the principal. I was invited to take off my coat and overboots, and I then followed a smiling young woman with a red kerchief on her head, who seemed to understand my halting Russian, though I could not follow her rapid speech.

We passed down a corridor and were met by the sound of merry chatter. I knew that it was holiday time and was surprised to see so many children running in and out of the class-rooms, apparently very busy. We passed through the hall, where a group of children in shorts and shirts were swinging on the ropes, learning to turn somersaults in the air, and, judging by their laughter and noise, having a fine time. Their instructor was a young boy of about seventeen.

The principal's office opened off the hall. I was greeted in a very friendly way, and she listened with interest to my request to look over the school. I explained that I was a teacher of seven years' experience, that I was very much interested in Soviet education, and eager to work in a Soviet school for some time in order to acquaint myself with the system from the inside.

'I shall be very pleased to show you over our school,' said the principal. 'As you probably know, the children are on holiday, and the school has therefore been turned into a club like all other schools. Come and see what the children are doing.'

We went into a room where a group of children, mainly boys, were playing chess, draughts, and other table games. 'This room is for quiet games,' explained the principal, 'and that tall, dark boy over there is in charge this morning. There is a chess tournament going on at the moment.'

We went farther and entered a room where several children were constructing something together out of Meccano. Some smaller ones were playing with a wooden constructor. There was, as far as I could see, no-one in charge here. There was perfect order, all seeming completely absorbed in their tasks. 'What are you making?'

I asked one of the younger ones. 'We are making a model of the new bridge which is being built over the Volga. We found out all about it from the newspapers.' 'We are going to put our model in the exhibition,' said a little girl of about ten years. 'The exhibition of our district,' she added, as I looked puzzled. 'All the schools will send models of what they have been doing in the holidays.'

We left them and looked into the library and reading-room, presided over by a teacher. There were interesting charts, diagrams and pictures, which invited closer inspection, on the walls. We passed a room where an excited group was evidently rehearsing a play under the guidance of a young girl of about eighteen, and then returned to the office.

After further conversation on general subjects, the principal asked me whether I would care to join her staff. I explained my doubts about the Anglo-American School, saying that I wanted to be right in the heart of Soviet school life, and had therefore thought of teaching English in a Russian school.

'You are quite mistaken about our school,' said the principal. 'It is as much a Soviet school as any other school in Moscow. The Soviet Government, in accordance with its national policy, opens a school in any language where there is a group of people speaking it. As a matter of fact, there are several Tartar schools in Moscow, a German school, a Gipsy school, and many others run in the national languages. Many workers and specialists have come over from America and England to work in the Soviet Union. Their children know no Russian, and it would be very hard for them to study in the Russian language. There are also many Soviet employees who have been working abroad, and their children sometimes know English even better than their native language. When they return to Moscow or to Leningrad they can continue to study in English.'

'Our school is run on exactly the same lines as any other

Moscow school. We have the same syllabuses and text books, all of which have been translated especially for us from the Russian and published in the Soviet Union. I can assure you that if you decide to work in our school, you will have every opportunity of studying the whole educational system from the inside. The fact that the school is run in your own language will only facilitate this.'

These arguments seemed very convincing, and I promised to think the matter over and to give my answer in a day or two. I had already almost made up my mind. I liked the atmosphere of the place.

It was finally arranged that on January 15th, after the holidays, I was to take over the third class, as the present teacher was going off on maternity leave for four months. The mathematics teacher was leaving in the summer, and I was to take over her work in the autumn term. Meanwhile I was invited to go on some of the excursions with the children. I welcomed this opportunity of getting to know some of my pupils beforehand and looked forward to my first excursion, which was to one of the parks, where we had a whole day's programme in front of us.

We assembled at school at ten o'clock in the morning. There were twenty-five children, varying in age from ten to fourteen. The young girl, whom I had first seen conducting a rehearsal, was in charge. She was, I learnt, the school Pioneer leader. She collected some small coins from each child. Evidently the only expenses were tram fares to and from the park. We set off and reached the park within about twenty minutes, and lined up to get skis. Each of us was fitted with a suitable pair of skis and we started over the crisp snow.

The park had formerly been a hunting place belonging to one of the grand dukes and its woods have been preserved intact. We had a lovely time ski-ing among the trees, and in an hour or two were quite ready for a good lunch. We gave back our skis, and made for the large house

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near the entrance. We joined several hundred children who were assembled outside, and were soon seated in an enormous dining-room, consuming a hearty lunch with a good appetite.

After lunch we went to a neighbouring club and were shown a children's film. The children then went home after a most enjoyable day.

I afterwards found that this excursion was typical of the wonderful way that the local soviets co-operate with the schools in the organization of children's holidays. Parks, cinemas, museums, theatres, were given up to the children during their holidays, and their time was organized in such a way that no-one wandered around the streets in an aimless fashion, or got up to mischief at home while parents were away at work. All participation in holiday activities was voluntary, yet they were so interesting that the majority of the children took part.

I could see from my first impression of the children that they were lively and intelligent. I also noticed that they were extremely full of energy. This made me think very seriously about the class I was taking over. Thirty lively youngsters of the age of ten and eleven to be taught as a class! I was used to teaching in schools where the group system, or variations of the Dalton Plan, had obtained, and where it was thought that these methods were the only ones to give free scope for the development of the individual. We had believed that class teaching turned out children of one type, as if they were produced by a machine. In fact, I had been up to that moment a thorough believer in what is called 'progressive' or 'free' education. The idea of teaching children as a class went against all my ideas.

'You will get all the help you need from the supervisor,' said the principal. 'She is my assistant, and is responsible for the running of the curriculum.'

Comrade Holland, the supervisor, sat down with me a few days before school began, and showed me how I must

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plan my work. There was a printed syllabus for each subject, covering a year's work, and I was expected to set out in detail, in my weekly plans, how I intended to present each lesson. I was left quite free to present the material as I wished, with the proviso that I completed each term's work in good time.

'Be sure to come to me in the case of any difficulty,' said Comrade Holland, when she had finished the explanation. 'It is my job to help you with methods and discipline; also do not be surprised to see me at your lessons—that is also part of my job.'

I left her, feeling very determined not to come to her with any case of discipline. I had had no difficulties with discipline before, but I expected certain difficulties with my new class at first, as I had never tackled this kind of problem before. I was somewhat surprised that Comrade Holland had suggested my coming to her over problems of discipline. I had always considered such questions a disgrace and to be hidden as far as possible from the eye of authority!

The day before school began we had a staff meeting, and I met the rest of the teachers. They were all very friendly. There were several Americans, one other English teacher, and two Russian teachers, both of whom spoke English very well. There was also an Austrian who had lived in America and who taught gym and German, and an Australian; altogether quite an international group.

At the meeting, the tasks for the second half-year were clearly explained. There were to be no pupils left back in a class for a second year; we must achieve a high standard in the quality of our teaching; each child must be helped to master the syllabus well. Then the reasons for certain shortcomings in the previous term's work were taken up. The supervisor criticized Comrade Bolton very severely for not having the right approach to the children in class 2. She was too strict. In fact, her strictness seemed to

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make the children afraid of her, afraid to ask her questions or to discuss their difficulties after school. 'You must be an older comrade, to whom the children tell all their troubles and difficulties and whom they respect and love. You have a high wall between yourself and the children, you do not let them feel you as a person, and they therefore fear you as a teacher. Kolya, for example, is a very bright boy. He is becoming a difficult child through lack of proper handling. Also several children have been sent out of class. These are not Soviet methods. Although we have a class system of teaching, we must have an individual approach to every child and we must love and understand each one. We aim at self-discipline, which can only be developed in an atmosphere of comradeship and justice.'

I was astonished at this very frank criticism at an open meeting and looked at Comrade Bolton to see how she was taking it. She said nothing, although I could see that the meeting expected to hear her opinion. I found later that she was quite new to the Soviet Union and had found it very hard to adapt herself. She had been working in a school abroad where she had had to keep a large class of children in order and had evidently managed it by a system of strict discipline.

The meeting went on. 'I have difficulties with my fifth class,' said Comrade Young, who taught English in the upper classes. 'Whereas the sixth and seventh classes study well, do their homework, and are in every way interested in their work, the fifth class is noisy and comes unprepared for lessons. They became worse towards the end of last term, and I should like help and advice from the meeting.' This time my astonishment knew no bounds. Here was admission of weakness in an open meeting, and advice was being sought as if it were a matter of course.

There were many suggestions and offers of help. The supervisor promised to attend English lessons in that class more often and to help find the root of the matter. 'I expect

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you will have to change your methods,' she said. 'Obviously this class needs special handling. Maybe your material is not presented in the right way—anyway, we shall help you and give a report at the next monthly meeting.'

I was impressed all through the meeting at the interest shown in every question by all the staff, and by the friendly yet keen criticism given. It all seemed to be taken in as friendly a way as it was meant, and was evidently a usual part of the procedure. The minutes were taken very carefully, and a resolution passed on every point requiring one.

After the meeting I was approached by a charming little grey-haired woman, who introduced herself as the school translator. She was also the chairman of the school trade-union committee. She asked if I wished to join the Russian class for teachers and urged me to come to her without fail in the case of any difficulty or need. She especially asked me to be sure to inform her of any shortcomings I might find in the running of the school. I, as a newcomer, might notice some which might be taken for granted by the others.

'It is the duty of the trade union committee to help to eliminate any shortcomings in the school. Another duty is to look after members, see that they have good conditions of work, and put them in touch with recreational possibilities such as the theatre, cinema, excursions, participation in sports—in fact, anything they may be interested in,' she concluded.

I went home with a host of new impressions to think over. So Soviet teachers confessed their weaknesses openly—was this not really a far better way to progress? The whole system seemed to be one of co-operation and mutual aid. The trade union seemed to be a kind of fairy god-mother. I was almost convinced that I should ask for advice and help myself if I had any difficulties with my class on the following day. . . .

As I worked over my plans for the first week's lessons,

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I was assailed with doubts. How was I going to ensure the mastery of the material by every child within a given time? We had been told that there must be no failing pupils, that every child must master the syllabus well. What was I going to do with the slower children? How was I going to keep the quicker ones busy? How was I going to keep the whole class interested at once? I wished I had discussed these questions more fully with the principal or the supervisor. But when I remembered the friendly attitude of everyone at the meeting, my fears vanished, and my only thought was that whatever my difficulties, I was sure to obtain help in overcoming them all.

CHAPTER TWO

My Class



‘Although we have a class system of teaching, we must have an individual approach to every child.’ These words, uttered by the supervisor at my first staff meeting, were my greatest aid in dealing with my class of thirty lively children.

My experiences during the first year of teaching in Moscow showed me how useless is a teacher whose only aim is to impart knowledge, and that such a teacher is not respected. It is necessary to be an educator, an ‘up-bringer’ as the Russians call it, and to give a sound character training as well as good academic knowledge. I was able to win my way into the hearts of my pupils by studying them each individually and treating them as comrades.

I found the children very intelligent, rather noisy and uncontrolled, but very easily interested. The first lesson I had with them was arithmetic, and as I kept them very busy, they worked fairly quietly. But when it came to geography, I found it more difficult to control them. They were seemingly very much interested in this subject, but all began to ask questions at once, without any idea of order. I stopped the lesson to explain that unless we had some sort of discipline we should not be able to get on fast enough. One girl raised her hand. ‘The trouble with our class is that although everyone knows the rules, we forget to keep them.’

‘What are the rules?’ I asked curiously.

‘Well,’ she answered, ‘we know that while the teacher is talking and explaining a lesson, we should listen. Then

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we know that we should raise our hands if we wish to ask questions, because if all speak at once, it is impossible to hear anything. I think we should have socialist competition with the fourth class, as we did last term.'

'Yes, yes,' everyone agreed.

These remarks seemed to serve as a reminder, for the class studied quietly until the end of the morning.

At the end of the last lesson a girl and boy came into the room. The girl, a lovely, dark-haired, dark-eyed child of about twelve, asked my permission to make an announcement to the class. On my giving permission, she turned to the class. 'The fourth class challenges you to socialist competition for this term on the following points: excellent discipline during class, always ready for lessons, towel and soap always in order. Sidney and I have been chosen by our class to check up. If you agree, you must also choose two representatives to help us to check. Do you agree?'

Class 3 seemed unanimous, and the girl turned to leave, adding that they were going to stay after school to make a chart and wanted the third class representatives to stay and help. Class 3 proceeded to elect two members. Luba, the girl who had spoken about socialist competition earlier, during the geography lesson, was chosen, together with a bright-eyed boy called Vova, who had been one of the noisier ones during the morning.

I dismissed the class, and Luba and Vova came up to me. 'Don't you think, Comrade,' said Vova, 'that for the chart it would be interesting to have a race between two trains from, say, Turkestan to Siberia? We could represent each class by an engine of the latest type—I think a Felix Dzerzhinsky model would be good. We can move the engines forward one space for each point gained by the classes in the competition.'

'I think it is a very good idea,' I agreed.

Julia and Sidney came in with a large piece of drawing paper, pencils and paints, and the four set to work. Two

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engines were cut out, painted and labelled 'Class 3' and 'Class 4' respectively across the front. Slots were made along the line from Turkestan to Siberia, and the whole chart was pinned up in the hall on a large board. This board was already covered with charts and several socialist agreements between individuals. While I examined the other papers, the four children held a short discussion as to how and when they were going to check the three points of the competition.

'Each class must have a discipline book ready by tomorrow morning,' said Julia. 'Vova, you must see that the teachers sign the discipline of your class after every lesson and be sure that they write down the names of any disturbers, so that we shall know who is keeping back the class from winning. I shall see to our book. That will make it easy to check on point one. The teacher must also sign whether the class was ready or not and that will help for point two. I think, though, that the class president must also have a book of records, and keep a list of people who do not keep these points, so that when we have a meeting, we can know who they are.'

'The sanitars should check on the soap and towel, I think,' said Luba. 'They can keep their own records, and tell us every week when we move the engines forward.'

Everything settled to their satisfaction, they dispersed to collect their books, preparatory to going home. Luba came up to me. 'Our class must win the competition,' she said, eagerly. 'The first and second class want to join in now. That is very good, it will make it more exciting to see which class gets the red banner at the end of the term. The fourth class got it last term.'

'Of course our class must win,' I said, fired then and there with the determination to do everything in my power to bring this about. 'What do you think we must do in order to win?' I asked.

'We must not let the disturbers spoil our class—we must

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have a class meeting to discuss the best way of working for the red banner. We are having elections for class president and pioneer leaders very soon, and it will be easier to work then.' I was struck by Luba's earnestness and evident interest in the class, and as she said good-bye and ran off home, I felt that I was going to enjoy working with my class, whatever the difficulties.

I read some of the socialist agreements pinned on the board. Two girls had signed an agreement to have only good and excellent marks in all their subjects and to carry out social work. Social work? That was something new, and I made a note of it for further inquiry. At the moment I was very interested in the possibilities of socialist competition. It seemed a very good means of raising the standard of discipline and studies in the school. I wondered if it would not encourage a bad spirit of rivalry among the children.

I returned to the staff room and was met by Comrade Young.

'Well, how did you get on?' he asked.

'I am very interested in socialist competition; the children seem full of it. Does it really work?'

'Of course it does,' he answered. 'It is the means by which the whole country is rising to a higher level—industry, agriculture, every aspect of life is changed and improved by socialist competition. You will see how it works out as you go along. By the way, please, write an article for our staff wall-newspaper on your first impressions of the school. I am the editor and the next number is coming out in a few days.'

In practice I found socialist competition a wonderful lever. The children crowded round the board in the hall every day to see who was ahead. Classes 5, 6, and 7 had also concluded a socialist competition, and their gay chart showed that the results would be hard to judge. The rivalry and bad feelings that I feared would arise seemed entirely

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lacking. Although for some days our class and the fourth were level and feeling ran high, Julia said to me, 'Wouldn't it be nice if both classes won?'

Vova, who overheard, said, 'I wish the whole school could be a red-banner school, then we might get the district red banner.'

This remark gave a new aspect to the whole competition. If all classes in our school became red-banner classes, then our school would have a chance in the district competitions. If our district became a red-banner district, it would have a chance in the city competitions—the possibilities became endless.

A few days after I had been working in the school, I was approached by Sonya, the Pioneer leader. She was a fair, curly-haired girl of about eighteen, with a bright face and dancing blue eyes. She wore the red pioneer tie around her neck.

'I want to make a plan of work for this term with you. As you know, I am the chief pioneer leader of the school, but my special care is the third class, so we shall see a lot of each other.'

The girl was very attractive, she had such a jolly smile and her very walk was full of life. I had seen her in the hall during recreation times, always surrounded by a group of children, and wherever she appeared she was greeted with friendly cries of 'Sonya, listen . . .' or 'Sonya, couldn't we . . . ?' She was popular and loved by the children, most of whom wore red ties round their necks.

'I am afraid I am very ignorant of the functions of the Pioneer organization,' I said. 'Will you explain them to me? And perhaps you can tell me what social work is and when and what are troop soviet meetings?'

'In short, the main task of the Pioneer organization is to help to improve the studies and strengthen the discipline of the school by helping the children to discipline them-

selves. We also organize interesting recreational activities for the children after school, run summer and winter camps and organize sports groups. We work in close contact with the teachers and try to co-operate with them in every way. The Pioneers are divided into troops of about thirty. Each troop has two or three units. Every unit elects its own leader and every troop elects its own soviet. In this way we have a means of self-government. The whole school, by the way, elects its school soviet, and this body is very important in the running of the school.'

'What about non-pioneers, then?' I asked. 'Do they have no share in this self-government?'

'First of all, I have not yet met a child who, at the age of ten, did not want to be a pioneer. That means that all the best children are pioneers. The requirements for acceptance into the Pioneer organization are simple—the applicant must be a good pupil, that is, he or she must have good marks for lessons and conduct, and must carry out some kind of social work. All non-pioneers who wish may attend meetings and even attach themselves to a particular unit until they are accepted into the organization.'

'But what is social work?' I asked again.

'Social work is voluntary work done for the benefit of the community. Everyone in the Soviet Union does social work, and the children do, too. They may be monitors, help in the library, be unit leaders, class presidents, leaders of a circle—in fact, any task which they wish to undertake. This work is voluntary, but it is already becoming a tradition—one does it, and it makes the children really social-minded. Sometimes I have difficulty in satisfying the demands of all the children for social work, so keen are they to carry it out.'

'I think it is going to be very interesting to work with you,' I said, already feeling very much attracted to Sonya, and being sure that we were going to be good friends. 'What kind of plans shall we make and where do I come in?'

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'We shall put aside the fifth day of the week as Pioneer day for the third class. After lessons on that day we shall have unit meetings, or a troop soviet meeting, or have a troop excursion to the cinema or a museum. I hope it will be possible for you to be present at all these meetings. Then whenever a Pioneer has poor discipline or slacks at his lessons, please tell me, and we shall take the matter up at our unit meetings. I shall come in to lessons sometimes, to see how my Pioneers behave and study. We shall have unit and troop elections this week, so please come; keep the fifth day after lessons free for that.'

I promised to come to the elections and to make a point of attending Pioneer meetings in general. I was somewhat curious to see how this system of dual authority would work out. It would be simple enough if Sonya were as easy to work with as she seemed on our first acquaintance; but that put the matter on a personal basis. I was convinced that it was not as simple as one would imagine. There was a danger of dividing the loyalties of the children if ever a disagreement did arise.

From this talk with Sonya I saw discipline from another point of view. With an entirely new social system, it had been necessary to form a new tradition. Discipline meant something quite different. It was now necessary to train students who understood why they were studying, who realized that their school is a vital part of society and that they were the ones who would carry on the business of developing society when they had finished their studies. Here was no enforced discipline, no rule of the rod, no unwilling study merely because it was the law that all must study up to a certain age. Here was an explanation of Luba, Julia, Vova, Sidney, and all the rest of the eager, interested children—their lack of discipline when it occurred was only due to their eagerness to answer, or to forgetfulness; it was never deliberate rudeness to the teacher or an attempt to waste time. The children were far

too much interested in their studies, because these studies were real to them. Above all, they had to learn self-discipline because it is a lesson all must learn in life in order to be useful citizens.

On the fifth day of the week, before school, I was met on the stairs by Elga, the very best worker in my class. 'Remember, comrade, it's Pioneer day to-day. You are coming to the elections after school, aren't you?' I assured her that I had no intention of missing them. 'They will be in the Pioneer room,' she added, as she vanished into the room.

The Pioneer room was not very large, but it was very pleasant. The red banners hanging behind a bust of Lenin in one corner gave colour to the room. There were pictures and portraits on the walls; a cupboard with glass doors stood against the wall, giving a glimpse of some musical instruments on one shelf and table games piled on another. Tables and chairs stood ready for anyone who wished to read or play.

As there were about thirty Pioneers in my class, they formed a troop of their own. The Pioneer room was packed, children sitting on benches, chairs, on the window sills and the edge of tables. Elga made room for me by her, but in a few minutes, at a word from Sonya, the meeting split up into three groups, each evidently a unit; each group took a corner of the room and busily started to elect a leader. These elections were carried out by the children themselves and were rather noisy, but there was not the slightest evidence of ill-humour or quarrelling. Sonya went from group to group, while I sat down by the unit where I saw Luba and Vova.

After a long discussion on the relative merits of Milton, a quiet boy with a sense of humour, and Eleanor, who was just the opposite, being a noisy tomboy, always full of mischief, but a good pupil, nevertheless, it was finally

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decided that although Milton was a good member of the class, Eleanor had more ideas and would make unit meetings more interesting. So Eleanor was elected by a show of hands with a majority of several votes, and Milton was made her assistant.

In fifteen minutes all three units had elected their leaders, and the whole troop came together again to elect a troop soviet. Sonya took the chair.

'We need five members altogether,' she announced. 'We already have the three unit leaders—now we need an editor for the wall-newspaper, and a cultural worker. I want proposals, please.'

George was proposed as editor 'because he draws well', and Philip, 'because he writes good compositions'. After a discussion in which George himself suggested that Philip would make a better editor, and that he himself would like to be assistant editor, his proposal was accepted by the meeting. A girl called Raya was elected as cultural worker, and the meeting broke up, the newly chosen soviet remaining behind for a few moments.

The troop soviet decided to issue one wall-newspaper a month, and a special bulletin on January 21st, Lenin's Memorial Day. Raya promised to have a plan of excursions ready in a few days. Each unit leader was told to have a plan of activities for the month ready by the following week. Eleanor was chosen as chairman of the soviet, and the meeting closed.

'There is a new play on at the Children's Theatre, shall I buy a ticket for you, too, comrade?' Raya asked me as we left the Pioneer room.

'With pleasure,' I replied. 'How much?'

'Fifty kopeks,' was the answer. 'That is, for the best seats.'

As I handed her the money, I thought how cheap it was.

'Sonya, I am struck by the seriousness of these young people,' I said, as the children went home, and we walked

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up to the staff room. 'Does it not tend to make them precocious?'

'Oh, no, I don't think so at all,' she answered. 'The children under ten have practically no responsibility at all except the small duties in the classroom and the task of learning to be independent. And even in the third class we guide the activities in such a way that the children are not overburdened. They have just as much responsibility as they can carry, and they need that as character training.'

'Where did you get your training?' I asked.

'Oh, I have been in the Pioneer organization all my life!' she laughed. 'When I was fifteen, I became a member of the Komsomol (Y.C.L.), I took on a troop of younger Pioneers as my social work. Then a year later, when I went to the technicum of foreign languages, I used to come over to this school twice a week to help out the Pioneer leader and also to practise my English. When I finished the technicum I took on the job here. My predecessor went to the university. I attend a course once a week for Pioneer leaders and there we discuss our problems and get instructions. The main thing is to be a real older comrade to the children and to help them to pass their free time in as fruitful a way as possible.'

Indeed, as time went on I found Sonya as good a Pioneer leader as one could hope to find. She was extremely popular with the children, both large and small, and they respected her. She was never weak or sentimental and she criticized severely when necessary. But she always lent a sympathetic ear to any difficulties or complaints and did her best to straighten things out. Occasionally her forgetfulness or her slight weakness on the organizational side led to differences with members of the staff, who would get annoyed at not being informed of meetings; quite rightly, since they thus lost an opportunity of keeping up with their class. But the obvious sincerity of her apologies made annoyance shortlived, and she really did work in close

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co-operation with the teachers, trying always to consult them or to inform them of her plans. She tried her best to avoid any feeling of divided authority or lack of harmony.

In this way the Pioneer organization was a strong educational body, which supplemented the work done by the teachers by seeing that the children spent their time in a happy and wholesome way.

As I became more accustomed to my work and more closely acquainted with Soviet methods of education, I realized more and more the important role of the teacher in the lives of the children and, incidentally, in the lives of the parents too.

The Soviet teacher is entrusted with the enormous task of educating the young generation to take their places as builders of a new society, and is held responsible for this task. Mere academic qualifications are not enough; a teacher must also be a skilled psychologist, so that he can deal with any maladjustment among the children or any difficulty in their development; a teacher must be a fund of general knowledge, must be up to date in all the latest achievements of the Soviet Union in particular and the rest of the world in general; a teacher must understand the whole political structure of the U.S.S.R., its governing organs, its production plans, its policies. In short, a Soviet teacher must spend a certain amount of time each day on reading and study, otherwise he or she is behind the times and the children, who read the newspapers and are well up in world events, are ahead.

During my year's work with class 3, I not only had many interesting experiences and learnt a tremendous amount, but I had certain difficulties with a few of the pupils, and it was only by a thorough investigation into their home conditions and their outlook on life that I was able to deal with them in the right way and to help them to become good pupils.

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The class as a whole was of a very high level. Most of the children were extremely intelligent and had a tremendous desire to learn. They were always full of questions on their lessons and when it came to a discussion on current events they had a remarkably clear picture of everything that was going on in the world. When it came to high spirits and mischief they were, of course, like any other group of children of their age the world over.

It was difficult, however, for children new from London or New York or any other English-speaking part of the world to understand the attitude of Soviet children towards their teacher or fellow pupils. These new children were shocked to hear what they called 'tale-telling', or 'going against the code of honour'. That one child should accuse another straight out at a class meeting of any misdeed, in front of the teacher, was incomprehensible at first—or that one child should tell the teacher in class that two other children had been teasing someone during recreation. They had to realize that teacher and pupil were all pulling together to raise the general level of culture in the class, that the teacher was not going to punish anyone, but that by a free and frank criticism it is possible to overcome one's faults.

It took some time, too, for newer children to discriminate between real criticism or the reporting of some incident which was anti-social and actual 'tale-telling'. That one does not report a fight between two boys of the same size, but runs for help if a big one is punching a small one, or that one does not tell if a classmate has been teasing in a spirit of good nature, but does criticize him at a class meeting for malicious teasing—these are points which require judgement and the development of a real but new code of honour.

Whenever I had any difficulties I always received invaluable advice and help from the principal and from Comrade Holland, or from one of the teachers who had

MY CLASS

been in the Soviet Union long enough to absorb the methods of approach and the ways of dealing with children. Often my own experience with children served me as sufficient guide, but it was necessary to learn what steps could be taken in the elimination of a problem, or how much freedom was allowed in dealing with a child, as actual punishments are forbidden in Soviet schools.

One of my difficult pupils, Raymond, seemed at first sight lazy and completely indifferent to his work. His usual answer was, 'I don't know', and that sounded as if he did not care much whether he knew or not. I kept him after school and tested him in a few subjects. I was surprised at his quickness in arithmetic. 'Why don't you do as well as that in class?' I asked. 'Oh, what's the use?' was the reply. 'I am going to be an aeroplane designer when I grow up, and I only need to be able to measure. I can do that well enough.'

I sent for Raymond's mother and she confirmed what her son had said about his interest in aeroplanes. He was always making aeroplane models at home and she could not get him to do his homework properly. Aeroplanes seemed to be his only interest.

In a further talk with Raymond I continued our conversation on aeroplanes. I asked him why he did not belong to the school aeroplane modelling group. He said that 'the stuff they do there is too easy. I know all that'. So I suggested that he join the group at the district technical centre, and he eagerly agreed. 'If you really want to be a good aeroplane designer, Raymond,' I said, 'you must know arithmetic very well. You must be able to calculate even with fractions and decimals. You must also know geography and natural science, to know the places through which your aeroplane will have to fly, and the kinds of climate they will have to endure. You must be an educated man, don't you agree? Anyway, we shall go and enrol you in that circle to-morrow after school, so tell your mother you will be home later than usual.'

MY CLASS

When Raymond had gone I telephoned to the technical centre and spoke to the leader of the aeroplane modelling group. I explained the problem in a few words. He understood at once what was required of him, and agreed to do all that was necessary.

Gradually, with the co-operation of the group leader at the technical centre, Raymond began to take an interest in his lessons and to participate more actively in the life of the class. He became secretary of the aeroplane modelling group, which he attended twice a week after school, and drew several other boys from the class into it. He was very proud of the fact that he was the leader's assistant. He helped to look after the material and saw that the members of the group attended regularly. In fact, the leader told me that he was a most efficient secretary. The most important thing for me was that Raymond began to have a normal attitude towards his school life, and realized that he must study other things besides measuring in order to become a good aviation engineer.

Another really difficult person was George. George rarely did his homework properly, came late to school, and teased all his comrades on all occasions. Several members of the class asked to have a class meeting to discuss him and we arranged to have one after school. I was very curious to see how these extremely capable young people would carry on the meeting.

Elga took the chair, having been elected class president for the term. She began by saying that anyone not interested in the question of George could go home, as the meeting had to decide a very serious matter, and they did not want any disturbers. No one left.

'George is spoiling our chance for the red banner,' continued Elga. 'We are two points behind class 4 this week because of him. He does not do his homework, he never has his own towel and soap, but always uses someone else's before dinner. He is rude to his comrades. We must

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decide something definite about him, so let us have a discussion. Who wants to speak first?’

Vova got up. ‘I think he should be given five days in which to improve. If by then he is not better, he should be expelled from the class for a week, with a notice to his parents about it and be forced to study by himself at home.’

‘I think the class can help George by taking no notice of him in class,’ said a very quiet boy called Alec. ‘Some people laugh at him when he says something silly, and that only makes him worse. I shall help him by checking his homework every morning before school, to see that he is doing it. I shall sit next to him, too. I also think that our teacher should send a letter to his parents to tell them about our meeting and what we decide.’

‘He does good work when he wants to,’ said Raya. ‘Look at the way he helped to get out the wall-newspaper. He did some lovely drawings. That shows that he is not really as bad as he seems.’

‘George has a bad friend at home,’ said Eugene. ‘I know, because I went to visit him one day and this boy came in while I was there. He tried to persuade us to cut school the next day and go out with him. I told him that I was a Pioneer and so did not do such things. I told George afterwards that I would bring this up at a unit meeting, but he promised not to play with that boy any more, so I did not say anything.’

George, looking very embarrassed, got up to speak. ‘I am not friends with that boy any more. Please give me a chance and I promise to improve. When I was friendly with that boy I did not want to study; he would invite me to the cinema, or to go out with him, so I used to leave my homework. I suppose I got into a bad habit and now I can’t get out of it. I give my word that I shall improve. I should like to sit next to Alec and I think that it will help me to behave better in class.’

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After some further discussion, Alec's suggestion was accepted and I was asked to see George's mother and tell her the whole story. The meeting broke up, and I stopped to speak to George. I noticed that he had been drawing on a piece of paper and that he certainly had a gift for it. 'I know you like drawing, George,' I remarked.

'I like it better than anything else,' was the answer.

'Why do you not belong to the art circle?' I asked.

'Well, I wanted to join the district art school a long time ago, but Sonya would not give me a letter of recommendation because my marks are too bad.'

'Let us make an agreement, George,' I said. 'You behave well and show good results at the end of a week, and I shall speak to Sonya about the drawing class. Do you think that is a fair arrangement?'

George's face lit up. 'Comrade, I promise you that I shall improve and get into the art school!' and he went off with a determined look on his face.

George improved from that day. Of course he had his ups and downs, but Alec proved a very good friend to him and I often talked to him about his difficulties and coached him in his weak subjects so that his marks improved all round. The whole class behaved in a very comradely way towards him, and at the following meeting Elga reported with satisfaction that George had kept his word. He joined the drawing class at the art school and attended three times a week after school. He became one of their best pupils, his pictures being shown at an exhibition of children's drawings at the end of the year. In the Pioneer room hung a beautiful portrait of Stalin done in charcoal by George and presented with great pride.

I called George's mother to school and spoke to her very seriously. She had not interested herself enough in George and his friends. She gave me the impression of being somewhat flighty. I made her promise to check George's work every day and to see with whom he played in the courtyard.

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I also asked her to find out for me the number of the school attended by George's 'bad' friend as I wished to get into contact with the principal and inform him of the whole matter, also to find out if there was proper control of the boy in his class.

I had been struck by the attitude of the class towards George. As a rule children tend to be far harsher in their judgement of each other than adults, but here I found them always ready to find excuses for a comrade's misdeeds, or to find his good points and emphasize them. On the other hand, they were not prepared to allow anyone to go against the collective and to spoil its reputation. Our repeated difficulties with Jimmy, the last of the 'problems', whom I shall mention here, serve as a good illustration of this point.

Jimmy was a worry to me for a long time. In the cases of the other children I had found it a simple matter to deal with them once I had summed up the whole situation, because I had the parents' co-operation. Even in George's case, although his mother was not a very cultured woman, it was possible to speak to her and explain what she should do at home and to be sure that she would do her best to carry out my advice. In the question of Jimmy, however, the school was faced with a home situation which hindered every attempt we made to help. It was only when we tackled the problem of the home that we were eventually able to do something of permanent value for Jimmy.

There were many things about Jimmy to attract the attention of a teacher. He copied homework from others, disturbed lessons by bad behaviour, and was what in England would definitely be labelled as 'a problem child'. In spite of all this, however, there was something so charming in Jimmy's manner, such a devil-may-care look about him, that I had a soft spot for him from the very beginning. It was partly due to this feeling, I think, that I was able to gain his friendship more quickly.

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I sent for Jimmy's mother and found that she was only semi-literate. She explained that at the time of the Revolution she was completely illiterate and that her poor health had prevented her from studying later. She had been in America for some years when her husband had been sent to buy machinery for the Soviet Government. On her return she had joined an evening school for the liquidation of illiteracy. She was now completing the fourth class—that is, she was one year ahead of her son. Jimmy was obviously beyond her—she could not cope with him. He did not listen to her and in any case she could not control his homework as she knew very little English. The father was very busy and came home late every day.

I called Jimmy and told his mother in his presence that she must come to school once a week to give me a report of his behaviour at home. I also asked that the father should come to see me the following week, or at least that he should ring me up.

I asked the principal to be present at the interview with Jimmy's father, and she said that she would speak to him herself. When he did come I was a very interested listener to the conversation between them, as well as an active participant in the discussion. I was very impressed by the sincerity of Soviet workers towards one another.

The principal accused the father of neglecting his son and of failing in his very important duty as a parent. She insisted that he come home several times a week early enough to see his son, talk to him, and check up his work; and she insisted that he telephone the school at least once a fortnight for a report on Jimmy's progress. 'If you do not take more interest in your son, we shall have to inform your trade union committee and you will then have to be given time off for this most important duty,' she concluded.

Jimmy's father promised to take a more active part in his son's upbringing. What else could he do in such circumstances? I also arranged to visit him at his flat the follow-

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ing week, as I wished to see Jimmy in his home to complete the picture.

This interview was by no means the end of our trouble with Jimmy—it took many months of patient work to achieve anything like success. Some of my further difficulties with Jimmy and my dealings with him I have described in following chapters, but this interview was interesting from another point of view. It emphasized the different aspects of Soviet educational work—that it is connected with the whole social system, and that it embraces the parents and the whole environment of the child, as well as the child itself. Because the Soviet school is an integral part of society, society itself must take its share in the upbringing of children. Parents have as much responsibility towards their children as the school.

Jimmy's case was a difficult one. He had been badly neglected at home and had got into bad habits of lying and deceit. By strict control both at home and at school (the home also being checked up by the school) and by keeping Jimmy well occupied in different circles during his spare time, we gradually showed him that it was far better to excel in sports and to make engineering models, than to run about in the streets and idle away his time.

The examples of Raymond, George, and Jimmy show what measures are taken in Soviet schools to straighten out maladjustments or difficulties. Soviet educationists do not recognize 'the problem child'. Practically every child, if dealt with individually, sympathetically, and with an understanding of his environment, can be a normal child especially if his environment can be changed if it is unsuitable, and this can only be done under a Soviet system, where old houses are being pulled down every day, and the standard of culture is rising all the time. Every child, though he must learn to be a good member of the collective, must also be treated as an individual by the teacher and given whatever special attention he may require.

MY CLASS

Within a very short time I began to feel that my class as a whole was settling down to work and that a strong bond of sympathy and comradeship was established between us. I made it a point to visit the children in their homes and so have a complete picture of their lives both at home and at school. I also had a talk with every child at least twice a month, when I would look through his or her marks and notebooks and discuss suggestions for further improvement. During such talks, naturally, other matters would crop up and we would often find ourselves discussing such important matters as friendship, how nice it would be if our class were the best class, how to do it, and so forth—in fact, the children would discuss all their intimate problems and I listened with great sympathy to every subject, however small, thus gaining the trust and confidence of my pupils.

At the end of the term we all had the intense satisfaction of receiving a red banner, together with the fourth class. The two classes had a high record both for studies and discipline. The expression on the faces of the children of both classes was ample reward for a term's hard work.

CHAPTER THREE

A Healthy Mind in a Healthy Body



The doctor and the nurse were two very important full-time members of the school staff. Their surgery was fitted with up-to-date equipment and the medical history of every child was kept with meticulous care.

The doctor would walk round the school every morning, trailing her fingers along the tops of cupboards, along the edges of pictures and in every odd corner, for signs of dust. She would also see that the sanitary conditions were in perfect order. She was present in the dining-room while the children were having their dinner and examined the food to see that it was well balanced and tasty. She wrote a daily record of her observations in a special book, which she gave to the principal to read and sign.

The doctor and nurse were very popular with the children, and their surgery was always visited by a stream of them with cut fingers, something in the eye, or some slight pain, real or imaginary. Every patient was listened to with great attention and made to feel that he or she had done the right thing to come. I have known several possible epidemics prevented by the fact that children feeling slightly unwell always went straight to the doctor before going into class. On the other hand, slackers hoping to be excused from lessons on the plea of a headache were usually detected and sent into class with friendly advice to study seriously.

Two of my girls, Stella and Eva, came to me not long after I had begun to work at the school and told me that

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the nurse had agreed to their being the sanitars of our class. They explained that their duty was to see that the room was aired properly between lessons (in January the temperature out of doors goes down as low as thirty degrees below freezing point and makes it impossible to open the window for more than a moment during lessons), to check up towel and soap and see that everyone used them before lunch, to see that everyone was cleanly and neatly dressed, and that the floor was kept clean. In addition, they would attend a first-aid circle led by the nurse once a week together with the sanitars of the other classes. Each day one of the sanitars would be on duty as assistant in the surgery during recreation time and would attend to cuts and bruises under the supervision of the nurse.

This first-aid circle issued a monthly bulletin dealing with different aspects of hygiene and it was made attractive by drawings and cartoons carried out by George or Kolya or one of the other artists among our pupils. Sometimes the bulletin consisted of gay posters specially printed by the Commissariat of Health, sometimes it contained articles written by the children themselves, and sometimes it was made up of attractive pictures which taught lessons of cleanliness and health far better than any lectures.

The walls of the surgery were covered with posters telling how to avoid colds, showing what kind of exercises should be done every morning, explaining how to attend to cuts, how to set broken bones, and medical hints of every kind.

The nurse or doctor also ran two other circles, one for the younger children and another for the older ones, in which they prepared for the tests for the First-Aid Badge. Many children wore this badge on their coats or jackets.

In all the four years that I worked in the Anglo-American School there was not a single epidemic. Attendance was far better than I have ever known it in any other country. This was due firstly to the preventive measures

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taken by the doctor, and secondly to the prompt action taken in the case of illness.

I remember the case of one of the boys in my class. He came to school with a headache and went to the doctor before the first lesson. She found that he had a temperature and that he looked very red. She kept him in the surgery and would let no-one else in. Within a few hours the scarlet-fever rash appeared. The doctor phoned the fever hospital, an ambulance arrived and Eli was dispatched immediately. At the same time a message was sent to the parents. Eli only returned to school when the hospital discharged him with a note that he was cured and out of quarantine.

That same evening after Eli had been sent to hospital, the whole school was disinfected by people sent specially from the district board of health, and the next day lessons went on as usual. We did not have another case of scarlet fever in the school that term. The same thing happened several times and never once did the illness spread.

If a child was found to have some weakness or to need special treatment, he was sent to the district children's clinic after school hours to see special doctors or to receive special treatment. Delicate children were sent away to children's sanatoria during the holidays for a cure, and they returned to school with improved health and renewed energy. Nor was that all—treatment was continued and the children were examined regularly to ensure further improvement without any setbacks.

Every type of medical service is free, and it is of the best. Children's clinics, hospitals, dental clinics, sanatoria—all do their share to keep the children fit. 'Prevention is better than cure, but when it is a question of cure, let it be the best one,' might well be the slogan of Soviet medicine.

It is also through active propaganda in the school that parents get drawn into campaigns for healthy living. It is very often the children who bring good habits into the

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home, as many parents still have to a certain extent their pre-Revolutionary tendencies and prejudices. It is the children who insist on sleeping with at least a small window open in the winter, who clean their teeth regularly, who demand separate towels and a frequent change of linen. It is the children who insist on their parents coming to school when the school doctor sends for them, and who see that the doctor's instructions are carried out.

'My grandmother doesn't like me to change for gym,' said Stella to me one day. 'She thinks I shall catch cold. I explained to her that I should catch a worse one if I perspired in my thick winter clothes and then sat down to the next lesson. She did not believe me, so I told her to ask the school doctor. Well, I can't expect my grandmother to know much, she never went to school, and so of course she does not understand.'

'Comrade, how can I stop my father from smoking so much?' was one of the questions put to the doctor by a member of the fourth class. 'We learnt in our natural science lesson to-day how bad it is for the health to smoke. Of course, I knew it was bad, and Pioneers don't smoke, but now I know the reason. I shall talk to my father to-day, but how shall I explain it clearly so that I can make him stop?'

'You show him your natural science text book and explain to him what your teacher told you. Also show him these pictures of the lungs of a heavy smoker. I shall lend them to you until to-morrow,' said the doctor.

I am afraid Sidney had a hard task with his father, but I am quite sure that he himself will not smoke when he grows older.

Great stress is laid on the importance of sport and gymnastics as a means of training a healthy body. The one gym lesson a week during school hours is only an introduction to numerous after-school activities. The sports circle in our school had many sections—a swimming group, an athletic

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group, a ski-ing and skating group, a gymnastic group and a group whose members were preparing for the junior 'Be Ready for Labour and Defence' badge, the tests for which include every aspect of sport.

The swimming enthusiasts visited the indoor baths during the winter, and the numerous bathing beaches along the Moscow river in the summer. The skaters were easily provided for by flooding the courtyard and making a capital skating rink. The skiers usually spent their free days in one of the parks or outside Moscow at one of the ski-ing centres.

In the summer, the children played volley-ball in the school playground or in the Park of Culture, and spent a good deal of time on athletics such as running, jumping, and swimming. Rowing, too, was a very popular sport.

Almost all the children in the upper classes wore the sports badge proudly on their jackets. The tests for these badges are of course graded for boys and girls. Otherwise both sexes take part in all sports and games together.

Summer camps and children's sanatoria are all under the jurisdiction of the Commissariat of Health. The chief person in these places is the doctor, who always has the last word in every arrangement. Summer holidays for the children are always planned to give them the maximum of rest and the best opportunity to gain health and strength for the coming year's study.

When on holiday in 1937 in Anapa on the Black Sea, I had a good opportunity of observing the running of children's sanatoria. These sanatoria are not only for children actually suffering from some disease, but are also for delicate children who need some special treatment in order to put them on their feet. Anapa is a children's resort and the cliffs and beach are always crowded with children clad in shorts and white shirts, with linen hats on their heads and light sandals on their feet.

A large part of the beach is kept for children's organiza-

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tions only, and here they bathe and sunbathe and make sandcastles. All the children looked plump and brown, dark brown. I saw hundreds of children and all looked happy and sounded so whenever I spoke to them. Although their day was planned very carefully, they nevertheless seemed to have plenty of free time to themselves to do as they liked.

There are special rest homes and holiday homes for little children of three and four years of age, and it was a common sight to see these little tots walking down to the beach, hand in hand, singing songs in their baby voices, taking their own slow time, accompanied by several young women in gaily-coloured sun-frocks.

Soviet parents are expected to do their share in the care of their children, but it is not left to their initiative to care for their children's health. Every crèche, kindergarten, and school has its efficient doctor and even in such places as the Palace of Pioneers or the Children's City in the Park of Culture and Rest there is a medical attendant as a permanent member of the staff. All these doctors and nurses work in very close co-operation with the teachers and instructors in charge of children, so that even in the classroom the child's health is considered and safeguarded just as much as his progress in studies.

CHAPTER FOUR

Mainly About Teachers



In September 1934 I took over the teaching of mathematics in the upper classes. My class became class 4 in the normal course of events, and went on to departmental teaching. I remained as their class adviser, of course, throughout their progress up the school.

Teaching in classes 4 to 7 gave me a wider opportunity of getting to know the children in all sections of the school. I was also glad to be teaching my own subject again, although I would not have missed my experience of the previous year as I considered it a most valuable one.

One day, early in the term, one of my geometry classes was visited by Comrade Holland and our inspector, who sat at the back and took notes. Being accustomed to visits from the principal, Comrade Holland, parents, and inspectors, neither I nor the children paid any attention to the visitors. At the end of the lesson the inspector came up to me and started discussing it. I had already mastered the Russian language sufficiently to carry on a general conversation, so I was able to speak to her quite easily.

'I am interested in your teaching,' she said. 'I see you have a very good way of presenting your material so that it is clear to everybody. Your method of presentation is, however, somewhat different from ours. I think you know enough Russian to be able to follow the district courses for teachers of mathematics, if you would like to attend them. Comrade Holland will give you all the particulars. I shall also telephone to the district pedagogical centre about your methods, as I feel sure that the mathematics instruc-

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tor will be interested. I shall visit you again shortly. Good-bye,' and she hurried off.

And so began my real contact with the educational world of Moscow. The year before, my Russian had been too poor to allow me to attend lectures and meetings on my own, and though our translator had been with me several times and someone sat by me to translate at general meetings, I had not been able to have a real talk with other teachers or to enter into the real spirit of the meetings.

Our inspector had evidently phoned to the pedagogical centre the same day, for within a very short time my class was again visited—this time by the inspector of mathematics of our district. (The Russians call them 'instructors', saying that it describes their functions better than the word 'inspectors', which savours too much of pre-revolutionary tyranny.) After the lesson, which was arithmetic, he asked me if I would give a short talk to a group of mathematics teachers on methods of teaching arithmetic in England in general, and how I teach it, in particular, dealing especially with the solution of problems. I answered that if my audience would not mind my broken Russian, I should be very pleased. It was finally arranged that one of our Russian teachers, who knew English very well, would go with me and translate my talk into Russian, and that I should participate directly only in the discussion, because we were afraid that I should not be able to make myself clear otherwise.

In further conversation with the inspector, I found that he led the courses attended by the mathematics teachers of our district. Here talks on methods were given by the best teachers, who thus passed on their experience to those less qualified or experienced than themselves. Here, too, knotty points in the teaching of certain sections of the syllabus were cleared up by general discussion.

'Our aim is to help every child to have a good knowledge of the subject,' said the inspector. 'We are not satisfied, as

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in other countries, if most of our pupils scrape through their examinations with a minimum of knowledge. We want every child to have a maximum of knowledge, so that he can become a well-educated citizen. So we try to help every teacher to master the best technique and methods of teaching. I visit schools and lessons very often and so I have a good idea of the conditions of the teaching of mathematics in our district, which consists of about thirty schools. Teachers visit each other, and a teacher in one school will organize an 'open lesson' to which teachers of other schools are invited. The principals try to make it possible for teachers to be free from time to time for this purpose—say, several times a year. I shall recommend several teachers to visit your lessons, if you don't mind? Of course, they do not understand English, but our subject almost speaks for itself!

I enjoyed myself at the meeting at which I gave my talk. It was met with great interest and the discussion which followed showed how seriously these teachers took their work. We discussed mainly the methods of teaching problems in arithmetic, what types of problems were best adapted to the training of reasoning power at different ages, and what proportion of time should be spent on problems.

The minutes of the meeting were kept very carefully and sent to be typed. They would serve as reading matter for other teachers at the district pedagogical centre, where there was a room devoted to mathematics.

In this way I became linked with my fellow mathematicians and gained many new ideas in the methods of teaching. The other teachers of our school were linked in a similar way with the teachers of their subjects.

The first time I visited the district pedagogical centre was in the company of Comrade Edmunds, our biology teacher. She had begun to work in our school a little after me, and was rather new to pedagogical work.

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The centre was about fifteen minutes' walk from our school, and was situated at the top of the building which housed our district Board of Education. It consisted of several large, airy rooms, each devoted to one or two of the main school subjects. In each room there were exhibits of interesting work done by teachers or children, text-books and journals of every description, typewritten verbatim reports of model lessons, new visual material—everything possible dealing with the given subject.* In a corner sat the specialist, surrounded by teachers, while other teachers sat at the tables reading or writing out suggestions from typewritten sheets.

Comrade Edmunds and I first looked round the natural science room. She got some very good ideas on botany teaching. There were folding models of flowers made by the children of the fifth class of one of the Russian schools. These models showed the whole structure of the flower, and she decided to introduce the making of such models into her fifth class work.

'After studying the actual flower, it will impress the structure on their minds,' she said.

When we had looked round, we spoke to the specialist, who had visited our school several times. We told her how enthusiastic we were over her exhibits.

'Of course, none of the paper models or drawings replace the actual study of living material,' she hastened to assure us. 'You are right to get all that from the Botanical Gardens. It is of primary importance that the children handle and observe the actual things about which they are studying, otherwise the subjects become divorced from life, completely abstract. Botany can be the most uninteresting of subjects when not connected with nature itself.'

We spent a short while in the mathematics room, where my friend the mathematics inspector was very busy with a group of teachers who had evidently come for consultation.

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As we walked away, we discussed this wonderful means of uniting all teachers, of exchanging experiences, and of keeping up to date with the latest developments on the educational front. We had in our bags the calendar of meetings and consultations at the centre, and we both agreed to go often and keep up with the times.

At the end of every term a conference of all the educational workers, including teachers, principals and workers on the Board of Education, was held in every district to discuss the results of the term's work.

The conference usually began with a report by the head of the district Board of Education in which he summed up the term's work, giving in detail the percentages of passes and failures in the district, the names of the schools with the highest records and those with the worst, and always mentioning the names of the teachers who had a hundred per cent passes and those whose work was keeping the results of their schools down.

After this, the principal of one of the best schools of the district, or an outstanding teacher, would describe how his or her school had achieved its high standard, giving concrete examples of how they had overcome their difficulties.

When the discussion began, many teachers and principals took the floor. They criticized the Board of Education, they criticized the inspectors, in fact they picked out all the weak spots in the work of the district and turned the merciless light of criticism on them.

In the interval for lunch at my first conference of this kind, I tried to explain how staggered I was at the amount of criticism. 'The head of the Board of Education must feel overwhelmed by all this criticism,' I said. 'Of course, I have already learnt that criticism is one of the main means for improving things, but . . .'

'Your breath is a little taken away by it all,' smilingly cut in our principal.

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'Well, yes,' I had to admit.

'Never mind, that is the way to improve things, and there is really no reason ever for anyone to feel annoyed or offended. This criticism is given in a purely impersonal way, there is no malice intended. If you analyse your reactions, you will see that they are a result of your upbringing, which has given you a certain feeling of false pride. After all, why should we mind criticism if it is meant in a friendly way? Or if you do, then you will be careful to avoid giving a reason for being criticized! You will see that the head of the Board of Education, in his summing up of the discussion, will accept the criticism in the spirit in which it is meant.'

She was right. The summing up took the criticism into consideration, and some of it was admitted to be justified. The plan put forward for the work of the following term was concrete, and we went home feeling that we had not wasted our time.

We had been given tickets to the teachers' club for that evening. It was going to be reopened after extensive alterations. Each district had some kind of teachers' club, but this one was an all-Moscow club, a lovely, palatial building. The large main hall could seat over six hundred people, and the small hall, with its moulding on the walls and shimmering green curtains, made a very appropriate ball-room. There was a library, reading-room, a buffet and several rest-rooms with comfortable arm-chairs, wireless, and gramophone. At the very top was a restaurant, where one could have a meal until midnight.

We were treated to a most enjoyable concert. Singers from the Grand Opera House, some of the best musicians of the Soviet Union, and actors who recited Chekhov's tales as only Russians can, followed one another. And after the concert, there was a dance!

The teachers' club was not only a place of amusement, but also a cultural centre for the teachers of Moscow. One

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could join a group in drama, sports, dancing, be a member of the choir, study languages, or attend lectures on the history of education. All tickets were free, and obtainable in the schools through the local trade union organizations. To judge by the attendance, the club was an extremely popular place. Its programmes were discussed at periodical meetings, and all criticisms and suggestions taken into account by the management.

The monthly staff meeting was a clearing house for many difficulties and was one of the real factors in improving the standard of our work. It would usually begin with a short report on the month's work by the principal or the supervisor, in which the weaknesses as well as the highlights were brought out. Then several teachers would give a brief account of their progress during the month, after which there would be a general discussion.

As teachers visited each other's lessons quite often, sitting at the back of the classrooms with a pile of notebooks or some other work, they all had quite a good picture of the school as a whole. They were not only interested in their own subjects and their own successes—they were all keen on the school as a whole being as perfect as possible. Those who were class-advisers, of course, had an added incentive to visit lessons, because of their interest in the progress of each child under their care. Therefore everyone took an active part in the discussions. We all wanted our school to take a good place in the district, and, if possible, to get the red banner.

One of the early meetings of the autumn term of 1936, after we had had several changes on our staff, stands out as a typical example. The question of discipline, once more a burning one because of the changes, cropped up.

Comrade Young, our English teacher, brought the question up. 'Once more,' he said, 'partly owing to changes, we have lost our standard. Each teacher makes different demands from the children and the consequence

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is a lowered standard of discipline throughout the upper classes. Comrade Edmunds is getting slack again—her discipline improved so much last year and the good results of her examinations in June were the outcome of this. Comrade Ivanova must visit other classes and realize that the children can behave in quite a different way from the one that they show her. Let us once more clarify the whole business. First, no talking while the teacher is explaining; second, hands up if the children wish to speak. These two rules are only common sense, the children understand them, and without them we cannot have order.'

Comrade Ivanova, our new Russian teacher, who spoke English quite well, said that she realized she was wrong, but the children were so interested in their subject that they all called out at once and she hadn't the heart to stop them.

'So are they interested in geography,' interrupted Comrade Rogers. 'Ask any of them; but you won't find them calling out and shouting during my lessons. They tried that out on me when I first began teaching here, being children, but I told them plainly that we have too much work to do in order to cover our syllabus and that I could not stand a waste of time. I find that the children are very well disciplined now, and they work very well, too.'

'Yes, we do not want to produce little anarchists,' said the principal, quietly. 'We are educating our children in good life habits, not just teaching them subjects. That is where Comrade Ivanova is mistaken. The children are interested in their lessons, there is no doubt about that. But that is not the point. They must have respect for the teacher and for each other, and must behave in a cultured way in consequence. We must not forget that although our children understand why they must study, and are genuinely interested in getting an education, they are, nevertheless, only children, and as such they need guiding and training throughout their school career. The function of a teacher is primarily that of an educator.'

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At these meetings we always achieved a great deal by means of frank criticism. The criticism was never personal, being given in a friendly spirit, and when one got over the feeling of false pride, which made one feel hurt, and even indignant, at the idea of being 'exposed' in public, it was a real way to progress. Of course, pride spurred us on so as to avoid criticism as well as in order to achieve something! I cannot say that I ever really liked being criticized, but after reasoning it out with myself, I had to admit that it really was a means of improving my work and of exposing weaknesses, however small, of which I would otherwise have been completely unaware.

Small matters were usually discussed between individuals and it was only when such talks bore little or no fruit, or when the question was a general one, that the matter was brought up at an open meeting.

At the end of every school year we had a general staff meeting to discuss our results and to choose our 'otlichniki'¹—that is, our best teachers and workers. In order to qualify for the title of 'excellent', a teacher must have no failing pupils (that is, no child must have the mark of 'poor' for the year in his or her subject), a minimum of 'fair' pupils, and a majority of pupils with the mark of 'excellent' in the final results. In addition, all mark books, records and plans must be kept in good order during the whole year, and the teacher must be an active member of the collective, that is, he or she must be a good social influence and be felt throughout the school.

At the end of my second year, our results were very good. We had a few failing pupils and those we hoped would pass their re-tests in August. We had three excellent teachers—the geography teacher, Comrade Rogers, the third class teacher, and myself. I, as having the best results, was recommended to the Moscow Board of Education for a

¹ 'Otlichnik' means 'excellent person', and is a title of honour.

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premium, and the other two were premiated by the school.

A few days later, the principal, the chairman of our trade union, and I, received invitations to a big meeting in the affiliated Opera House. The theatre was decorated with slogans on red bunting, 'Greetings to our excellent teachers!', 'Long live our Great Stalin!' and others. A band was playing gay tunes, and we took our seats with a feeling of excitement.

The meeting was opened by the chairman of the Moscow Board of Education. She very briefly summed up the year's work and then went on to say that the Board of Education had picked out the sixty best teachers in the city and was going to premium them for their excellent work. She proceeded to read out names and schools. We watched with interest as one after another went up to the stage to receive beautiful certificates in leather covers and to hear what premium would be awarded to them. These premiums varied from gold watches, furniture, and books to the sum of five hundred rubles.

Suddenly my heart gave a leap! I heard my name being called out! And to make it more certain, the name and number of our school. My friends almost pushed me out of my seat, and I walked up to the stage in a dream. It was so unexpected. I found myself being warmly shaken by the hand and received the big certificate. I was premiated with five hundred rubles.

I was met by smiles on my return to my place. 'We wanted you to have a surprise,' whispered the chairman of our trade union. 'You were recommended by our district Board of Education. I am so glad, because you really deserve it.' It was one of the most thrilling moments of my whole stay in the U.S.S.R.

After the meeting there was a performance of the opera *Mazeppa*, by Tchaikovsky, and I came home after midnight with my certificate in its leather case under my arm.

CHAPTER FIVE

Administrative Measures



In September 1935, in addition to my teaching work, I was appointed as supervisor in Comrade Holland's place, on her departure for America. I found myself in an extremely interesting position and one that gave me further experience and insight into the administrative part of school life. I was now responsible for the running of the curriculum and it was my duty to visit lessons, help the weaker teachers, give talks on the methods of teaching, and control the level of achievement throughout the school. I had to know every teacher and every child. I taught three lessons a day, and devoted the rest of my time to my duties as supervisor.

When I was appointed to this work I expressed my unwillingness to take it. I said that I had no previous experience in administrative work and that I had never had a consistent training in methods. I was told by the principal and the school inspector that they considered me perfectly capable of tackling the job, and that I could always get help at the pedagogical centre. There are not yet enough teachers and principals in the Soviet Union to supply the demand of an educational system which is developing at a lightning speed. This often entails the promotion of teachers to the position of principal or supervisor, even if they have no wish for promotion at the moment. The best teachers are being promoted all the time, and usually prove a great success in their new position.

One of the first things that I did on my promotion was

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to go down to the city pedagogical centre to ask for advice. There was a special person in charge of the supervisors' section and I found her very helpful. She showed me several typewritten leaflets in which the functions and duties of a supervisor were explained in detail; she also showed me a model plan of work and some good ways of checking results, many by means of graphs and charts. I also found that there was a weekly course for supervisors which I immediately decided to attend.

The theme of the first meeting was introduced by one of the oldest and most experienced supervisors of Moscow. She described in detail how to make a plan of the term's work. She read her own plan and described how she had made it. After her talk there was a general discussion in which many present took an active part. I got a great many good ideas from this meeting and resolved to attend all the subsequent ones. I became friendly with many Moscow supervisors through these meetings and visited many of their schools, where I had a good opportunity of observing them at their work.

One of the difficulties that I encountered in my work was the question of marks. The marks used in Soviet schools are excellent, good, fair, poor, and very poor, according to the standard of the children's work. 'Poor' and 'Very Poor' are failing marks. The children valued their marks highly and used them to measure their standard of achievement. It was on the basis of these marks that socialist agreements were concluded between members of a class, or between classes. These marks were entered into the class journal and into the child's school diary simultaneously by the teacher. The diaries were the books in which the children wrote their homework and kept a record of their progress.

There were some members of our staff who were against marks altogether. They had come from schools abroad where marks did not exist. They thus thought that in an

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advanced country like the Soviet Union there should also be no necessity of giving marks. They could not understand that there must be some standard by which progress can be measured, as the progress of each individual child is very important. These marks also serve as a check on the teacher, both for the teacher himself and for the administration of the school.

We finally convinced these members of the staff of the necessity for marks at this stage of the development of Soviet education, but on checking up results by means of class visits, I found that the standard of marking was not uniform—in some cases it was much too low. Our natural science teacher, Comrade Edmunds, was far too lenient. At the same time I noticed that she had poor discipline and that the quality of the children's answers was not good.

After visiting a botany lesson in the sixth class, where the children were obviously unprepared for their lesson, I kept the class after school and asked Comrade Edmunds and the class adviser to be present. I went straight to the point. 'Your discipline was not good during the botany lesson, and many of you had not done your homework,' I said. 'Will you please explain this to me. Tanya, you are the president of the class, let us hear what you have to say, first.'

Tanya got up. She thought for a moment. 'I think, comrade, it's like this,' she began. 'Comrade Edmunds is not strict enough. She should not mark so easily. She gives 'good' for answers which really only deserve a 'fair', so of course many of the class do not bother to prepare their homework carefully. They think that they will get good marks anyway.'

Several hands went up as Tanya sat down.

'Well, Joseph, what do you think?'

'Our discipline is bad because we have not always enough to do. The subject is very interesting and I like looking through the microscope, and I also like it when

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we have a cinema lesson. But I think that the teacher should give us more difficult stuff. To-day's lesson was too easy, everyone knows it, so no-one felt inclined to work seriously.'

'I think that the unit leaders are getting slack,' said Edward. 'They should take up the question in unit meetings. If we know that Comrade Edmunds is a good teacher, we should listen to her lessons, even if she is too kind.'

And that seemed the general opinion; they called it 'too kind', but they had struck at the root of the matter. Children are quick to react to adult standards and Comrade Edmunds had been too lax, she had not kept them busy enough, and she had not set a high enough standard in her marking.

When the children had gone, after having decided to improve their discipline and to study harder, Comrade Edmunds and I remained to discuss the matter. I could see that she was impressed by the children's opinion. We planned the next three or four lessons carefully together, remembering to keep the children 'busy'. I arranged to attend her lessons regularly for the next week or two and to mark all answers simultaneously with her, comparing notes with her afterwards. She also agreed to visit my lessons to see how I conducted them and how I marked oral answers.

Discipline and work improved steadily in class six after that. The children themselves made an effort and the teacher, keeping in mind all that had been said, marked more strictly and checked up homework very carefully. She also kept the children well occupied during her lessons, and that was one of the main reasons for improved discipline.

In all subjects except mathematics and languages, emphasis is laid on oral answers. A child from the fourth class on is expected to get up in class and give a complete answer on any theme of the subject under discussion, and a mark is given for this answer. There are no 'catches' in

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Soviet methods of teaching. A child may only be asked questions on material which has been explained by the teacher and studied in class; but he is expected to master this material with the help of supplementary reading or research work at home and then be prepared to answer when called on in class.

It was in connection with this question of oral answers that another difficulty arose, and it arose over the chemistry and physics teacher. Several children of the seventh class came to me and complained that they had not yet been called on to answer in class and therefore had no oral mark for chemistry so far. They were worried, as the term was already advancing and they had made pledges to have excellent and good marks in this subject.

Usually the teachers take a great interest in socialist agreements between children and make a point of giving both parties a chance to answer within a short time of one another; but Comrade Grant had not yet been long enough in the U.S.S.R. to have entered completely into the life of a Soviet school.

I spoke to him and he promised to spend at least half of the following lesson in checking the knowledge of some of the children. I told him once again that every child must have at least two oral marks a term, as well as one or two for written tests, with an extra oral mark in doubtful cases. Unfortunately, Comrade Grant did not carry out my instructions, and I had to write an article criticizing him in our staff wall-newspaper. This led to a discussion at the following staff-meeting, and, in view of the facts brought up, Comrade Grant had to admit that he was not acting fairly towards the children and that he would have to change his methods. This he did, but only with the help of strict supervision and frequent visits to his classes by the principal and myself.

In our term report on the progress of the school to the Board of Education, we mentioned the difficulties that we

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were having with Comrade Grant, and asked for permission to change him at the end of the summer. We were told to train him if possible, because no teacher may be dismissed without very serious grounds. If, on the other hand, we found him incapable of teaching, or unlikely to make a suitable teacher, we were advised to recommend him to change his profession.

At the end of the year Comrade Grant left of his own free will, having decided to take up research work. This I advised him to do, as he was a brilliant physicist, but not interested in imparting his knowledge to children.

Comrade Brown had been engaged to teach natural science in the third and fourth classes. We were very short of teachers at that time and he had taught in progressive schools in America and claimed that he could teach any kind of class. He was taken for the usual month's trial.

When he had been in the school for about ten days, I was approached by two members of the fourth class.

'Comrade, will you please come to a class meeting. It is important and confidential,' they said.

Feeling somewhat mystified, I went into the classroom and asked what was the matter. The president soon explained.

'We want to tell you that we are not learning anything in natural science. We spend most of the lessons drawing fish, when we should learn all about them, instead. We could easily do the drawings for homework and learn about the skeleton and the habits of the fish in class. Our textbook tells us nearly everything we need to know, but Comrade Brown says, "It is all right, don't bother about the book." We are afraid that we are getting behind and will not know anything by the end of the year.'

I listened very carefully to everything that was being said. The children were very much in earnest and they had evidently discussed the question among themselves for some days, because they spoke to the point. They had also

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discussed the matter with the teacher in question and received no satisfaction from him. I promised to look into the matter carefully and dismissed the class, asking them not to discuss the question further until I gave them leave.

We had not visited Comrade Brown's classes, wishing him to get acquainted with the children, and to give him an opportunity to settle down. I had, however, given him full instructions as to his programme of work, and he had a copy of the syllabus for both classes. After this meeting, however, I decided to visit his classes without any further delay, and I found that the children's criticism was entirely justified.

In discussing his lesson with him after school, I asked Comrade Brown why he did not carry out my instructions and go according to the syllabus. I told him about the meeting with the children. He maintained that his methods were good and that the children were learning a lot with him. I had to explain that the Soviet educational system did not give teachers the right to disregard the prescribed syllabus and that in any case the children were also unsatisfied with their progress. I understood how a teacher, coming from a school where a great deal of freedom was given even in the choice of a syllabus, found it hard to realize the demands made on Soviet teachers; nevertheless, as I told Comrade Brown, he must understand his duties as a teacher in our school and conform accordingly.

Comrade Brown found it impossible to teach according to a definite plan and to resist the temptation of turning his natural science lessons into lessons in drawing, history, or whatever came into his head, and so, at the end of his month's trial, we had to look for another teacher to replace him. The children then got the information they wanted about the skeleton and the internal organs of a fish, and did beautiful drawings for homework!

I usually attended the meetings of the school soviet, or council, but one day I was kept by some other work, and

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arrived late. I found the principal and the five members of the council discussing a complaint lodged by the seventh class against the geography and history teacher. They said that she gave them far too much homework and that some of her lessons were above their heads. I disagreed with the children who had lodged the complaint and suggested that they should be called, as well as the teacher in question. This was done, and four of the weaker pupils of the seventh class arrived with Comrade Rogers.

I stated that I had visited many of Comrade Rogers' lessons and considered that they were very good and not above the heads of the average members of the seventh class. The geography was a difficult subject in that class, and needed a maximum of attention in class and over homework. It was also interesting that the pupils who had complained were four of the less serious members of the class, who were getting into slack habits.

Comrade Rogers was very surprised and rather indignant. She asked the four children why they had not come to her in the first place. If they found the material difficult, she would help them and they knew that she was always ready to discuss difficulties after school with anyone who wished. She could not understand why they had lodged a complaint in such a way.

The chairman of the council, a member of the seventh class himself, said that he did not find the work too difficult, and that he quite agreed that his four classmates should have gone to Comrade Rogers in the beginning. At times Comrade Rogers did speak a little bit too fast, and it was difficult to follow. He proposed that the matter be dropped. It was. No-one, however, felt that any rights had been curtailed or that it was anything unusual for such matters to be brought up at a council meeting. It was up to the teachers to sense a situation and guide it in the right direction as they did in this instance. Comrade Rogers made a point of helping the four children after school, and

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the implied criticism probably served as an extra reminder to her to be very careful in her handling of the class. As she had no sense of false dignity, she only benefited by such an occasion.

It may be seen from the above examples that discipline among the children was maintained purely by democratic means, but that the teacher was always the motive force and had to guide the children's meetings and decisions whenever necessary in as unobtrusive a way as possible. There was absolute freedom of criticism and as the relationship between the staff and the children was a very friendly one, it was possible to accept children's criticism where justified and to criticize the children without fear of giving them offence.

The running of the school, too, was democratic. Although the principal was responsible for the school to the local Board of Education, any decisions or criticisms made at the staff-meeting were binding, and the principal was criticized quite freely by the staff whenever it was thought necessary. On the other hand, the tremendous enthusiasm of Soviet teachers for their work, and their feeling of responsibility towards society for the upbringing of the future generation, made for a fine feeling of unity, and because of this there was always an atmosphere of co-operation among the staff of the schools and among the workers in the educational world as a whole, which made it possible to do really good work.

CHAPTER SIX

Examinations



One of the greatest trials of a child's life in most countries of the world is the school-leaving examination. There have been discussions on examinations in the educational world ever since I can remember, but the problem is still acute and no satisfactory solution seems to have been found yet.

In the Soviet Union yearly tests are given from class 4 upwards merely as a means of controlling the children's knowledge, and, through such a control, to ensure the correct presentation of material by the teachers. The results are used as a basis for discussion and serve to improve methods of teaching in the following school year.

No 'catches' of any kind are used. The children are questioned only on the actual material covered in class. Every teacher must leave time for a thorough review towards the end of the year, and any part of the syllabus not covered thoroughly is not included in the test questions. Questions are oral, except in mathematics and languages, where there is a written paper as well.

The syllabus for the year in each subject is divided into themes, typed, and pinned on the wall in the classrooms about a month before the tests, so that each child knows exactly what questions he or she may be called upon to answer. On the day of the test, this syllabus is cut into strips, a theme to each strip, and each child draws one of these slips when it comes to his or her turn to answer.

The tests are conducted by the subject teachers them-

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selves, but there are usually two assistants, one of them a teacher of parallel classes, and the other usually a member of the school administration, such as the principal or supervisor, or a member of the local Board of Education. Only one test may be given a day, and oral tests must be organized in such a way that there is a break every forty-five minutes.

As class adviser, I always took a great interest in the way my children prepared for their yearly tests. I advised them well ahead of time to make up any past work that they had missed through absence and to get help from the subject teachers after school on weak points. As soon as the syllabuses were posted on the class notice-board, I would go through them with groups of children and try to help them to find their own weaknesses, arranging myself to have them coached by the teachers whenever necessary.

At class meetings some of the best pupils would give reports as to how they were preparing themselves for the tests, and the weak ones would be asked to give an account of themselves. Good pupils would undertake to help the weaker ones. In this way the whole class would work seriously and consistently. I would explain how the tests show up not only their actual ability to acquire knowledge, but the way that they had been working during the year. They knew, of course, that promotion depended not only on the results of the tests, but on their year's record as well.

As a subject teacher, I spent at least ten minutes of my lessons on review, taking up different points in the order of their importance and difficulty. I also made a point of coaching the weaker pupils the moment they showed signs of weakness, thus enabling them to keep up with the class and preventing anyone from dropping far behind.

The syllabus in every subject allows a certain amount of time for review during the year, and is planned with a view to enabling any normal average child to master it without difficulty.

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Parents' meetings were called and parents would be informed of their tasks in connection with the tests. They were warned against worrying, scaring, or threatening their children, and advised to see that they kept regular hours and had plenty of fresh air. It was also impressed upon them that they must control their children's homework and see that it was done seriously. Soviet educationalists lay great stress on homework as a means of developing and encouraging independent work and research.

On the whole, the children took the tests as a matter of course, and practically never showed signs of strain. A few of the very nervous ones were exempted from taking them by the doctor and passed into the next class on the basis of their year's work.

The answers at the oral tests on the whole were given clearly, with a self-confidence which showed that the children were well prepared. It was always a pleasure to see the quiet smile of satisfaction on a child's face as he looked at his question and sat down for a few minutes at a front desk to prepare his answer.

A typical test was that in zoology for the seventh class (average age about fifteen). The class was divided for oral tests into two shifts, to obviate too long a session, which would lead to fatigue. The first shift came at nine o'clock and the second at two. The room was surrounded by charts on all the themes in the syllabus, charts which had been in use during the year. Long tables at the sides contained skeletons of fish, birds, small mammals, and also models of all kinds.

At nine o'clock the seventeen children of the first shift came in quietly and sat down, leaving the front desks empty. Comrade Edmunds said a few words of explanation. 'I shall call three pupils to begin with. They will come up, take a question slip and sit down at one of the front desks. They may have four or five minutes to prepare. There are pencils and paper on the desks ready for them.

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You may use any chart or model to illustrate your answers, and may bring the model to your desk while you are preparing. When you have answered you may leave the room or sit down at the back, as you wish. At the end of every forty-five minutes we shall have a break. When everyone has finished you will wait outside while we discuss the marks and I shall then call everyone in and tell you the results. Any questions?’

She then called three children, who drew slips, sat down at the three front desks, and began to scribble a few notes. They took models and looked at them thoughtfully. Comrade Edmunds had purposely chosen good pupils to begin with, to set a note of confidence for the class.

As the first came up to answer, another was called and sat down to prepare.

‘My theme is the external features and internal structure of the fish. I shall start with the external features, scales, fins and lateral line.’ And, taking up the skeleton with which to illustrate his answer, Roderick launched forth into a lucid and thorough treatment of the subject.

I had no hesitation in marking him ‘excellent’ on the duplicate mark sheet which I had, as he sat down at the back of the room. I could easily see by the way he answered that he had a very good grasp of the subject and that he could express himself clearly and well.

And so followed others, most of them giving very full, complete answers. One girl was very nervous when she came up to answer, and she kept stopping until Comrade Edmunds quietly told her to sit down. ‘Think again for a minute or two, my dear, and I shall call you again soon.’ And when she got up again, she answered quite well and with more self-assurance. Another boy obviously did not know the theme he was given except in the vaguest way. He was given another slip and answered that question very well. Comrade Edmunds asked him a few extra questions on other parts of the syllabus, to make quite sure that he

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had only one weak spot in his knowledge. This proving to be the case, I marked him 'good', and afterwards, on comparison, I found that she had done the same.

When everyone had finished and left the room, Comrade Edmunds and I compared our marks. We agreed in almost every case, and where our marks differed, we discussed each case separately and decided finally on which mark to give. The results were very satisfactory—eleven excellent marks, four 'goods' and two 'fairs'. The children were called in, heard their marks and went home without that feeling of suspense which exists when results are not out for some time after the test.

After the last test we had a general staff meeting to discuss the results. All children having a general mark of 'fair' or over for the year's work and for the tests, passed into the next class. In the case of a poor mark, there was a careful investigation and discussion, and usually, a child who failed in one or more subjects in the tests had to take another test before the beginning of the autumn term.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Parents



'Parents are not allowed in' the school premises except to interview the head teacher.' Thus read a notice outside one of the elementary schools under the Essex education committee on the outskirts of London. When I told this to some Soviet teachers, they would not believe that such a thing could be true.

In the Soviet Union it is considered part of a parent's duties to keep in close contact with the school. If this is not done, the school makes a point of bringing home to the parents their responsibilities towards their children. Parents are invited to the school at regular intervals and encouraged to drop in at any time to visit lessons or to take duty in the dining-room during mealtime. Parents are also invited to give talks on various subjects at all kinds of class, school and Pioneer meetings.

Every school has its parents' committee, which is elected yearly by a general parents' meeting and which plays an important part in the life of the school. This committee helps in the organization of celebrations and parties for the children, appoints parents to take duty in the school at recreation time and in the dining-room, and serves as a check on the work of the school in general. The principal gives a full report on the work of the school at a termly parents' meeting and there is always a display of keen interest and a lively discussion.

In addition to general meetings, there are monthly class-

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meetings at which the specific problems of that class are discussed. It sometimes happened that the parents would criticize a teacher for the way he or she dealt with the class or for the way the subject matter was handled, and then a discussion between the teacher in question and the parents would ensue. We found that parents were mainly interested in their own children and their attitude to the class as a whole often depended on the progress of their children. Nevertheless, we often got helpful ideas from these criticisms, and in any case we always tried to satisfy the parents by explaining everything very clearly.

The question of the physics teacher was brought up at one of the parents' meetings of the seventh class. Several parents criticized his attitude to the class and brought up the same points that we had discussed at several staff meetings. In this case the principal explained that we were aware of the teacher's shortcomings and were doing our best to help him to overcome them. He was young, and we hoped that he would improve. The teacher himself was not present at the meeting, so it was decided to put off a discussion until the following meeting, so that he could also take part in it.

Every child had a school diary in which all homework was written and where all marks for the different subjects were entered by the teachers. At the end of each week the class-adviser wrote a brief report and the parents were expected to sign as an indication that they had read it and were aware of the child's progress. There was also space where they could write a note to the teacher if they wished to ask for special information or to make some additional remarks. In this way a parent was able to know exactly what homework his or her child was supposed to do at home and what kind of marks he had. In the event of a parent not signing, the teacher rang up or sent a letter immediately, thus keeping a check on the parents as well as on the children.

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Teachers in Soviet schools are quite used to seeing a mother or, more rarely, a father, sitting at the back of the classroom during a lesson, and always make a point of discussing the lesson afterwards. The parent may be able to explain a child's difficulty with homework, or make some suggestion as to the presentation of material which may be very useful to the teacher.

A class adviser is expected to have a complete picture of the home environment of every child in the class. In order to do this, it is necessary to visit the homes fairly frequently. I found this part of my work interesting, though very tiring at times. It gave me an insight into the family life of many Soviet workers.

I always found a warm welcome wherever I went, and all the children were eager for me to visit them, even when they knew that either I was going to complain about them to their parents or vice versa. After I had visited a number of parents, I realized that bringing up a child was not an easy task when both mother and father were away at work all day. It meant very careful planning on the part of both parents in order to see enough of their children and to control what they did in their spare time. It also made me realize how important and necessary it was to include as many children as possible in extra-curricular activities either at school, in the district technical or art centres, or in the Red Corner¹ of the houses in which they lived.

As our parents lived in every part of Moscow (our school being the only one in the English language), it was sometimes difficult to get at them, especially for a busy person like myself. I therefore decided to begin by visiting the parents of the more difficult members of my class. In consequence, as Jimmy had caused me great trouble, he was one of the first to be visited. I sent a note to his parents, asking them which day would be convenient for me to come, and I received an answer, naming a date. Jimmy's

¹ Red Corner is a club room.

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father asked me particularly to come in the evening, as he would not be at home earlier.

Having had careful instructions from Jimmy as to how to find my way, I arrived at eight o'clock to find the whole family at home. The samovar was steaming on the table, which was laid as if for a special occasion. I felt embarrassed at so much attention, as I sat down and was offered tea, bread and butter, jam, sweets, and biscuits.

Jimmy lived in a very old wooden house, a true remnant of pre-revolutionary Russia. The two rooms were small and the kitchen was shared with another family. 'We are going to be given a flat in a new house this summer,' said Jimmy's father, who worked on the construction of the underground. 'You must come and see us then, and we shall be able to make you really comfortable. The whole of this street is going to be cleared shortly and a large block of flats erected. Old Moscow was full of wooden houses, but in ten years' time there will not be one left, except perhaps as a museum.'

After tea, we got down to business. I told them that Jimmy was improving at school but that he still did not do his homework regularly. I began to ask questions as to how Jimmy spent his free time and what he did at home. I found that he did not come home straight from school, that he spent very little time on his homework and that he played in the courtyard until very late in the evening.

While this conversation was going on, Jimmy sat and listened.

'Is what your mother has told me correct, Jimmy?' I asked.

'Yes,' was the reply.

'Do you like reading?'

'Not much.' Jimmy showed me his books. He had quite a good collection of both Russian and English books.

'I like skating better than anything,' he volunteered, as we looked at the books. 'And in the summer I like fishing. I skate in the evenings, that is why I come home late.'

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We decided to make a rough time-table for Jimmy for his free time after school. Together with him we decided what time he should do his homework and at what time he should come home to bed in the evening. I also suggested that he read for at least half an hour every day, either in English or in Russian. He agreed to try the time-table for two weeks, to see how it worked out. His mother, who did not go out to work, promised to report his progress at her weekly visits to me at the school. Jimmy then retired to bed and I stayed a short while, discussing the best way of interesting him in his studies and in reading. I suggested that his father bought him some books on sport and engineering to awaken his interest in reading, and also some of the fascinating children's books published by the Children's Publishing House.

Jimmy's father took me home in his car, first taking me for a ride round the broad new streets that had recently been made in Moscow. He had brought his car back with him from America. 'I shall exchange it soon for a new M1,' he said. 'We shall shortly have the best automobiles in the world on the Moscow streets. Wait till you see the new "ZIS 101", the latest model from the Stalin Auto-works.' He left me at my door.

'Don't forget, Jimmy is your most important job at the moment,' I said, as I thanked him for his hospitality and the ride.

'All right, we shall do our best. Come again soon.' And he glided off.

'Comrade, which do you think is better, a cook or a pilot?' asked Eugene one day.

'That is a difficult question to answer. Why do you ask?' was my reply.

'My mother is a cook and Ina's mother is a pilot, and we were discussing which was better.'

'Supposing we bring the question up at our class-

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meeting to-day and find what the general opinion of the class is,' I suggested, and Eugene thought that it was a good idea.

This was the origin of a discussion on parents. I had realized that the question was a serious one when Eugene put it, but I was not prepared for the very serious opinions expressed at the meeting of twelve-year-olds. Eugene put his question and immediately several children wanted to answer it.

'I think a cook is more important than a pilot because we have to eat,' said one child.

'No, a pilot is more necessary in case we have war,' said another.

'My mother is a dress-designer, and I think she is as important as anyone,' asserted one girl.

'Well, but I think the most important thing is whether Eugene's mother is a good cook or not. If she is, she is important. So is Ina's mother, if she is a good pilot. Every kind of mother is necessary. Mine is a teacher, and I am sure she is very necessary,' said Ann.

'Right, right!' chimed in several voices.

'My mother *is* a very good cook. She works in a dining-room which feeds five hundred people, and she got a premium,' said Eugene, with pride in his voice.

The subject seemed confined to mothers—fathers were evidently taken for granted! The outcome of this discussion was that everyone agreed that all jobs were important and that mothers could only be judged by the quality of their work. We decided to issue a wall-newspaper on mothers and their work, because it transpired that we had workers of almost every kind among our parents, from the manager of a factory to an unskilled worker.

The newspaper was a great success. Some of the mothers had told their children the stories of their lives and their biographies made thrilling reading. We also stuck on the

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photographs of those mothers who were shock-workers¹ or in any way outstanding at their jobs. This proved a great incentive to their sons and daughters to show good results too; it was felt to be a disgrace to spoil the good name of their parents by a bad school record. And those children who did not have their parents' photographs in the wall-newspaper were ashamed and lost no time in telling their parents so.

One boy worried his mother every evening by running to the door to meet her when she came back from work to ask her if she had become a shock-worker yet. She telephoned to me in despair for assistance! I had to speak to the child for a long time before I could convince him that his mother was doing her very best and that he should wait for May 1st, when she would probably be premiated. She was premiated eventually, but whether she became one of the best workers because she had always been aiming at that, or whether it was due to the fact that her son had begun to take such an interest in her career, was never divulged!

Kostya, aged ten, had a very irritable father. He himself was a mischievous boy, and as his father suffered from nerves, Kostya's noise often became too much for him.

One day Kostya came to school and told his friends that he was going to report his father to the police, as he had hit him the evening before. And sure enough, after school, Kostya, and two other boys of his class went to the police and reported that his father beat him and that he wanted the case investigated.

On the following day Kostya's father was very surprised to receive a visit from a police-officer, who related the whole story. The police-officer seemed surprised to find that Kostya's father was a cultured man; he had evidently expected to find some ignorant and possibly drunken man

¹ Shock-worker—one who gives the lead to others and institutes improved methods of work.

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who knew no better than to beat his son. He was very reassured, however, on being told that Kostya's father did not make a habit of beating his son, that he had had a raging headache and had given his son a slap, after repeated requests to be quiet or to go outside to play. It was probably the first time in his life that Kostya had been slapped and he was therefore justifiably annoyed.

The police-officer said that he would call again within a month, according to regulations, though he felt sure that such an occasion would not occur again. Kostya was called in and admitted that he had never been beaten in his life and that this was the first time that he had been slapped. 'But,' he added, 'it is the law that parents may not touch their children, and my father ought to know that, as he is a Soviet lawyer himself.'

CHAPTER EIGHT

Extra-Curricular Activities



THE lesson gives academic knowledge which is considered essential to the child, and every child is expected to attend all lessons, irrespective of his or her personal tastes or preferences. There are many children, however, who have definite preferences for certain subjects and wish to study them further. For this purpose every school has a wide variety of circles and groups which go on after school hours and which any child who wishes may join. For those interested in drama and literature there are the drama and literary circles; for the scientifically minded there are the physics and chemistry circles; budding artists may join the artists' group, and musicians find an outlet in the orchestra and choir. In addition, there are all kinds of technical and constructional circles for aspiring young technicians and engineers, and in the case of any special interest, special circles are organized.

Attendance at these circles is voluntary, and no persuasion is used on a child to join. A child, having joined, is expected to work regularly for a certain reasonable period of time—either a term or until some piece of work or a model has been completed. Each circle has a competent leader, who is paid by the school or the Pioneer organization, but one of the children is elected as secretary and keeps the records of attendance and helps generally in the running of the work of the circle.

Different circles often combine for special occasions such as May 1st or November 7th, New Year's Eve, or the

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breaking up party at the end of the school year. On such occasions the drama circle usually produces a play or some short plays, costumes and scenery are designed by the art group, and the lighting effects are produced by the young scientists, who are nothing if not practical. There are always musical items by the choir and often by the school orchestra. At such functions there is also an exhibition of the work done by the different circles, including aeroplane models, paintings and drawings, stage-sets, etc.

In our school we had a very active artists' brigade of about ten people who did the decorations for many of our plays and also helped to decorate the school on special holidays. This brigade was led by Arthur, a talented member of the seventh class, and his designs were original and striking. His stage-set for the play, *The Fisherman and the Fish*, after Poushkin, was put into the all-Moscow Children's Exhibition in honour of the hundredth anniversary of Poushkin's death.

Another interesting circle was the 'Young Naturalists', which numbered about twenty. In addition to various aquariums, mice, and guinea-pigs, which were tended very carefully and whose development was recorded very accurately, part of these youngsters were attached to the Zoo and some others to the Botanical Gardens. At the Zoo they helped to look after certain animals and worked with the scientists who did research work there, making observations on the habits of such interesting creatures as monkeys, apes, and bears. Those interested in botany were active assistants in the Botanical Gardens.

I once had occasion to show a small group of English teachers on a visit to Moscow round the Botanical Gardens. We had only just entered when we were met by Seymour, a member of the fourth class of our school. He immediately offered to be our guide and displayed such an excellent knowledge of seeds and plants that the visitors were astonished. As we walked along the paths he pointed

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out all the plants of special interest and finally took us into the garden where experiments in crossing and grafting were carried out, many of them according to Michurin's¹ methods.

As we came out of this garden, Seymour suddenly ran up to a group of children and excitedly began to talk to them. We came up in time to see him expostulating with them for having picked a flower. He explained to them why these flowers should not be picked and let them go, with a final remark to the effect that they should respect Socialist property.

We ended up in the large conservatory where there was an exhibition to illustrate Michurin's wonderful work in the grafting and crossing of fruit. Here again Seymour gave us a very comprehensive explanation of all the exhibits.

I was very delighted with our guide, the more so, as I explained to our visitors after he had left us, because he had been a very destructive boy himself, with little respect for Socialist property. Through his intense interest in nature and his contact with the competent leader of the Young Naturalists at the Botanical Gardens, he had gradually begun to realize why Socialist property must be respected, and he became one of its keenest guards.

For those children who are expert technicians and constructors and for whom the school circle may not be adequate, there is the district technical centre. Here there are well-equipped rooms where young engineers may revel to their hearts' content. Constructors may make real wireless sets, model boats, aeroplanes, or locomotives, all of which can be made to work. Canoes and other light craft are made and are often used for a summer holiday on one of the rivers not far from Moscow.

Registration for circles at the technical centre is taken through the schools, the only requirement being a note

¹ Michurin: a great naturalist who made it possible to grow grapes in Siberia and cabbages within the Arctic Circle.

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from the Pioneer leader and teacher that the applicant is a good student. By this means the school is able to control the activities of the children and ensure their not being overloaded, and the necessity for a recommendation is an added incentive to good study.

Each district also has its art and music schools and here children are also accepted through the schools, after passing a test to see if they have any ability in art or music. There is also a sports centre where those interested in gymnastics, sports, or acrobatics may join numerous circles. There is some way of satisfying the desire of any child to spend his or her free time on any particular hobby or interest.

The aim of every child in Moscow is to belong to some circle in the Central House of Pioneers, or, as it is otherwise called, the Palace of Pioneers. It is also a privilege to receive a free ticket to its theatre, library and reading-room. This palace, being of a limited size, can only accommodate a limited number at a time of the thousands of children in Moscow, so that a pass to it is something to strive for. Only Pioneers with a high level of attainment or a good record of social work are given such passes.

The Palace of Pioneers is a veritable dream palace for children. From the outside it looks like some medieval castle, with its grey walls and turrets, but inside it is the last word in modernity and is equipped to provide satisfaction for almost any desire or dream a child might have, from arts, drama, literature, photography and film-making, to engineering and scientific research. There is also a real theatre where a company presents plays and where entertainments are also given by the children themselves. Here, also, the heroes of the Soviet Union in aviation and exploration, and the best writers, poets, artists, and musicians come to speak, read, or play to the children and to inspire them with a love for the best in everything.

Our school choir was invited on one occasion to take

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part in an international evening which was being held in the theatre of the Pioneer Palace. We were asked to give some English and American folk songs and our singing mistress prepared very carefully for the performance.

We were taken to our destination in a special bus, and when we got there found the place already swarming with children. Figures in all sorts of national costume ran up and down the staircase, while others ate ice-creams or drank milk in the buffet.

In the theatre the few isolated adults looked completely out of place in the audience of children who sat expectantly in their places, chatting merrily to each other. Suddenly, amid a fanfare of trumpets, the performers marched in from the back of the auditorium and took their places on the stage. Ukrainian, Jewish, German, Polish, Gypsy, Assyrian, and many other nationalities were represented. The master of ceremonies was a sturdy, lovely girl of about nine or ten years of age, with two black plaits over her shoulders and a red silk tie round her neck. She announced each item without the slightest sign of self-consciousness and introduced the performers, as, one after another, either in groups or individually, they presented their numbers to the enthusiastic audience.

The programme included songs, dances, recitations, and musical items. I was entranced by the dancing of some of the national groups, especially the Ukrainian and the Gypsy. A small virtuoso of ten years played exquisitely on the violin, and a young Jewish girl recited a poem so dramatically that even though the majority of those present could not understand the words she was heartily applauded.

None of the performers showed the slightest trace of self-consciousness or stage-fright. It is typical of Soviet children to have no fear of an audience and no shyness of new faces and new situations. They recite and play with the self-confidence of those well prepared and thus display

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their abilities to the best advantage. Their self-confidence is based on their feeling of security and the knowledge that they are free to study and express themselves in any way they wish.

The children's cinemas are always crowded with youngsters and provide such thrilling films as *Treasure Island* and *Captain Grant's Children*, *Tom Sawyer* and *A White Sail Looms*. As children under fourteen are seldom allowed into the ordinary cinemas, and never permitted to attend evening performances, they naturally go to every picture shown in their own cinemas, where adults are not allowed unless accompanied by a child! At these cinemas the last performance is over by 7.30 p.m. and the children are therefore not encouraged to go to bed late.

At frequent intervals the producers of children's films give special showings to which children are invited with the purpose of discussing these films with them. It is found that criticism by the children is extremely sound and very helpful. Film producers realize that they must consider the tastes of their young audience if they wish to make good films.

As a rule the children of our school went to the cinema on the fifth day of the week. They went collectively, which made it all the more interesting, as they could discuss the film afterwards at school. The teachers also made a point of seeing all the films with the children for the same reason. I myself often found the children's films even more interesting than those for adults. The older children, of course, even though they had not reached the age of fourteen, attended suitable adult films at afternoon performances.

The wireless provides very good programmes for children of all ages. There are two broadcasts a day; one for small children and the other for older ones. Through these broadcasts the children are introduced to stories of all nations, such as Robin Hood, Br'er Rabbit, Andersen's

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fairy tales, and others popular with children all over the world. The listeners are also told the lives and exploits of the heroes of the Soviet Union, such as Papanin and his three companions (not forgetting the dog!), flyers, border guards, the textile worker Vinogradova, Stakhanov, and countless others of every walk of life. Their biographies are told in a simple and interesting way calculated to inspire the hearers with a desire to do similar things. The Pioneer news gives all the latest achievements of Soviet science and technique and the latest conquests of nature. In this way Soviet children are kept in touch with the whole growth and development of their mighty fatherland and are taught to love it and to realize that its development and defence are the duty of every citizen. They are also given plays and programmes which foster in them the spirit of international brotherhood with all the children of the world.

Our pupils participated several times in international broadcasts, when Russian children spoke or recited in French, German, or English, and different national minorities gave numbers in their own languages. Our children usually sang English and American folk songs or recited some classical poetry.

The children's broadcasting committee carries on a tremendous correspondence with its listeners from all corners of the Soviet Union, who send their poems, stories, and illustrations in great numbers. The programmes are also influenced by the children's letters, because the young listeners are always ready to answer an invitation to state their views and preferences in regard to the broadcasts.

Social functions were very popular with our children, as with all children. One of the most enjoyable parties of the year was the masked ball on New Year's Eve. A huge fir-tree stood in the middle of the hall, its star-crested top touching the ceiling and its glittering decorations illuminated by tiny coloured lamps.

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The party began with songs and games and a general parade during which the best costumes were chosen by a committee of children. Then followed a visit from Grandfather Frost, dressed in the traditional costume of Santa Klaus. Grandfather Frost asked riddles, told amusing stories, and, before leaving, gave a present to everyone in the room.

When all the eatables had vanished, there was a programme presented by the children themselves either individually or in groups; and to finish up, dancing and mass games for as long as anyone wished, even up to midnight, on this special occasion, for the next day was the first day of the winter holidays.

Another interesting way of spending an evening was an international camp fire, when children of different nationalities (not necessarily foreigners) would meet at one of the schools and, around the 'fire' (made by electricity), exchange stories and recitations, songs and dances in the friendly twilight glow. These evenings helped greatly to foster the good feeling of brotherhood which exists between the nations of the U.S.S.R.

Pioneer troops often organized troop evenings, and here again, over a 'camp fire' topics of interest to the troop were discussed. I remember one interesting meeting at which the older children of fifteen discussed 'friendship'. I felt that the semi-darkness was very conducive to confidences and the contributions given by many children showed that they also felt as I did. The subject was discussed in its widest sense, as friendship between nations, between groups, and between individuals. The question of a friendship between two people, whether of the same or of different sexes, was gone into very carefully and the conclusion was that if these two became exclusive and separated themselves from the collective, their friendship was not a true one, but harmful to them both. If, on the other hand, they remained interested and active in the group and

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used their friendship to increase their use to society, their friendship was a wholesome one.

The question of friendship between teachers and pupils was raised. Several boys who had recently come from schools in other countries, and had been beaten by their teachers, quoted their attitude towards the teachers who had used the cane on them. One of them even supported the system of corporal punishment, but was ridiculed by his comrades. Others mentioned favouritism and the 'grandes passions' which exist in girls' schools in England and other countries. One and all were of the opinion that only in a Soviet school could there be real comradeship between teacher and pupils *as the rule* and not the exception.

Another interesting point raised in the discussion was—how far is a pupil justified in 'telling' about his or her companions. Several were still strongly under the influence of the code of honour which says 'Never tell tales.' There was a hot discussion on this point.

'Of course you shouldn't tell tales anywhere. By that I mean to sneak about someone behind his back,' said one of the children. 'You should first have a talk with the person concerned in private and warn him, but it is absolutely right to criticize even your best friend to his face, at a meeting, because it is only done to help.'

'In America,' said another, 'I should never have even dreamt of saying anything to a teacher about my classmates, because I knew that I would only get someone into trouble. Here there are no punishments and such things are discussed openly, so that we can improve ourselves and get rid of our shortcomings.'

In summing up, Sonya brought out particularly the question of international friendships. 'We must not forget that in our country we stand for friendship with all the children of the world. It makes no difference in our country whether a child be a Negro or a Jew, a Spaniard or a Tartar,

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an American or an Arab. We have stamped out all social hatreds and prejudices and I think that this is one of the important things to remember. I find that this troop has a very healthy idea about friendship between individuals, groups and between grown-ups and children. It remains for us to carry this good spirit into all our activities, so that the seventh class is a friendly class in every way. Now let us turn on the light, and what about some food and dancing?’

Although so much has been written about the children's theatres of Moscow, I feel that I must mention one or two visits that I made with our children, as they show very clearly what a large part these theatres play in the lives of the younger generation. The children's theatres are really their very own. They know all the actors and actresses by name, they know the repertoire of each theatre and they see every play going, many of them several times.

My class often went to the theatre, both collectively and individually. The child elected to get the tickets and organize the collective visits, carried out her job very capably. She asked for suggestions from the class as to which plays they wished to see, and decided accordingly. One of our collective visits was to the Theatre of the Young Spectator to see *Gymnasists*, a play showing school life under the Tsar and the attitude towards pupils who had the slightest revolutionary ideas. The play was extremely well acted, and the action was quick and absorbing.

I was as interested in the packed audience as in the play. I sat with the children of my own class (at that time the seventh class); on one side was an American girl who did not understand Russian well enough to appreciate the humorous incidents, but the boy on her other side translated the most important bits into her ear and enlarged on his explanations during the intervals. The children reacted to every incident in the play; the audience was at one with

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the actors and its appreciative applause at the end of each act must have been ample reward to the producers for their pains.

In the intervals several of my pupils felt it their duty to take me round the foyer, discuss the play with me, and in general play the part of 'hosts'. In fact, the few adults present looked quite out of place and I should have felt so without the company of my children.

In the foyer there were stage-sets from different plays in the repertoire of the theatre, and sketches of costumes hung on the walls. The buffet supplied tea, cocoa, and coffee, or cold fruit drinks, as well as cakes, biscuits, and sweets at very reasonable prices.

As we walked round during the intervals, I listened to the animated discussions of the play going on all around me. Some children were comparing the school shown in the play with their own school, others were comparing and criticizing the actors, while still others were comparing this play with others they had seen at the same theatre, some considered it better, some thought it inferior. One and all, however, were keenly interested in the theatre, and to judge by their conversation, the majority attended it regularly and had seen all its presentations.

Another visit I made was to the Central Children's Theatre in the company of the little children of classes 2 and 3 to see *The Golden Key* by Alexei Tolstoi. The Central Children's Theatre was formerly the Second Art Theatre and is a full-sized theatre with boxes, upper circle, gallery, etc. It is therefore not so intimate as the other theatres which were built more recently and are rectangular in shape, with just one balcony.

However, large as this theatre is, it was almost full of children between the ages of seven and thirteen, accompanied by a few teachers, pioneer leaders, or parents. Its domed ceiling echoed to the chatter of hundreds of voices and the attendants walked up and down somewhat

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anxiously, wondering if the noise would subside at the rising of the curtain. I suppose they are always worried before the performance begins, but I am also sure that their anxiety always vanishes as it did that time, for as the opening chords of a jolly tune were heard from the orchestra, the noise subsided and everyone settled down to listen and to look.

The play is full of the usual adventures that befall the hero of a fairy tale. The live puppet, who is the hero, soon earns the affections of the audience, who vastly appreciate his jokes and escapades. I realized as the action developed how absorbed the children were by every bit of it and my feeling that the play was too complicated in parts was evidently the reaction of an adult.

The most thrilling part came when the villain, fastened to a tree by his long beard, tried to persuade the hero to give him the golden key in exchange for a sack full of gold. As the hero seemed inclined to agree, and approached the tree, the whole audience as one man began to shout 'Don't give it to him! Don't give it to him!' and only sat back with relief when the puppet took their advice. Again they were almost on their feet when their hero thought of approaching the tree once more at the persuasion of Karakass-Barabass, the villain, when he offered to give advice as to the use of the key. Again they shouted 'Keep away! Keep away!' and burst out into clapping as their advice was taken once more. The play held the audience from beginning to end, and the children left the theatre with a satisfied look on their faces.

During the intervals, I spoke with different children and found that most of them had seen the play several times and had read it in story form. Some had even taken part in amateur performances of it at school or in the children's sections of their parents' clubs. They knew the play by heart, yet seemed just as thrilled as if they were seeing it for the first time.

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The buffet in the Children's Theatre is decorated in the most attractive way. There are little round tables with glass tops and rush-bottomed stools just right for small people to sit on, and the fare offered is the right kind for juvenile audiences. The walls are frescoed with gay scenes from fairy tales and children's stories.

The large foyer has a small dais at one end, and a piano, so that those who arrive early can join in the games and singing organized by a special cultural worker. The walls are decorated with pictures drawn and sent in by children from all corners of the Soviet Union and show undoubted talent. The children take possession of the foyer, corridors and wide staircase during the intervals and behave as if they are completely at home. A group of boys were running up and down the corridors; but most of the children walked round and looked at the photographs of the actors and actresses on the walls of the corridors and the pictures and stage-sets from different plays. The buffet, of course, was patronized by crowds of children, and the ice-cream counter kept up ceaseless trade.

The next morning I went down to the theatre and asked an attendant how I could obtain more detailed information about the inner working of the theatre. She took me to a large office and I introduced myself to an elderly woman who was sitting at a desk at one end. I was just about to explain the reason for my visit, when the telephone bell rang and the following conversation took place between this woman, who was, as I found out a little later, in charge of what she called the 'contact with our audience' department, and the Pioneer leader of one of the Moscow schools.

'Good afternoon, Comrade Anne. Yes, I left a message for you to call me. The rehearsal lasted rather a long time, so I did not want to keep the children for a discussion afterwards. Therefore, I ask you, please, to let the children write their impressions of the play and especially any criticisms and suggestions they wish to make. I am es-

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pecially interested to know which parts, if any, were boring to the children, and which ones they may consider incorrectly presented. I should also very much like your opinion. You were sitting with the children and had a very good opportunity to notice their reactions. Let each child write separately, because different children may have different ideas which might be omitted or overlooked in a collective letter. Could you bring the letters the day after to-morrow? Please do, as we want to put the play on very soon, and if alterations are to be made, it must be within the next few days.' She rang off and turned to me.

'Your telephone conversation has given me some of the information I need,' I said, as I explained the purpose of my visit. 'The children in our school are keen supporters of your theatre and many of them send in drawings and letters. This is the first time I have visited you in your new quarters and I should like to know what kind of a staff you have and how your work is organized, now that you have such large premises and greater scope.'

'As you know, our theatre is for the children and we are naturally out to please and attract them, as well as to provide them with wholesome matter to discuss and think about,' she began. 'We work with these ends in view. All our actors and actresses are adults, though many of them are very young. They succeed very well in presenting children's parts, as you know, and in order to be able to do so we must have close contact with our audiences. We must keep up with their development and interests. For this reason we invite representative groups from various schools to our rehearsals and discuss each new play with them. Some of the children are old friends, but we also invite new groups and as these are sometimes shy of giving their frank opinion, we ask the Pioneer leader, or teacher who accompanied them, to do what I asked Comrade Anne to do over the telephone just now. We naturally do not accept every suggestion or criticism and we ap-

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proach the whole question pedagogically—but this contact gives us the children's point of view and helps us to produce a play which they will enjoy and understand.'

'Why did you take off that very popular play, *Serezha Streltsov*?' I asked.

'Because it no longer served its purpose. That play was written at a certain period in the development of our schools and dealt with a definite problem which existed among the older children and the staff. It was very useful in exposing some weaknesses in the school system and the pupils of the seventh class upwards derived benefit as well as enjoyment from it. But unfortunately, although classes below the seventh were not supposed to come to the performances of this play, many younger children managed to get in by various means. They were not mature enough to understand the real object of the play and in consequence derived much harm from it. After all, our modern plays must deal with actual problems or cater for actual interests, otherwise they are of no use.'

'I am sorry that I never had an opportunity of attending one of your rehearsals, although our pupils have been among your keenest visitors,' I said.

'Yes, I know Sonya very well,' was the reply. 'She is a very keen Pioneer leader and comes very often with the children of your school. Do come with her next time, and if there is anything at any time that you wish to know, I shall always be only too pleased to help you.'

This was not the last visit I paid to the theatre by any means. I attended many plays with children of different classes and had many discussions with them. I also got to know several of the workers in the theatre. They were all good pedagogues, as well as being versed in the art of the theatre, and their work among the children is one of the greatest educational factors in Moscow.

CHAPTER NINE

Camp



Every school has its summer camp, and preparations for it begin months in advance. Preference is given to those who have no other means of getting out of town during the hot summer, or to those who are in special need of a good rest and care.

All camps are subsidized by the Board of Education. The parents have only to contribute a very reasonable sum which varies according to their salaries.

The camp sites are often permanent and the children live in wooden houses very like Swiss chalets, or in some old country house which has been preserved for the purpose. Others are hired for the summer, and it is a usual custom for a town school to hire the buildings of a village school and turn the classrooms into dormitories. Such school buildings are very convenient for a summer camp, as they already contain all sanitary conveniences and a kitchen ready for use. The Soviet educationists and doctors do not encourage camps under canvas, feeling that the children do not get the necessary rest and relaxation to regain full health and strength for the coming winter.

Our camp was a permanent one on the River Oka, near Kaluga, and was situated right at the edge of a pine forest, several hundred yards from the river bank. It consisted of six wooden houses, two of them with two stories, for sleeping accommodation, and a large open-air dining-room, covered by a roof in case of rain. Behind the dining-room was a clubroom, a library, and one or two rooms for

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circles on wet days. Otherwise all activities were carried on outside.

I had agreed to work at the camp for a month and a half during the summer holidays. I had a month's holiday first, instead of two, with a month's salary as compensation. I was paid as well for my work while at camp. There is always one teacher at camp, and it works out that in the large school each teacher has a turn about once in fifty years!

I left Moscow about ten days after camp had begun. After a six-hour journey, we arrived at Kaluga, a straggling, clean-looking town, surprisingly quiet at six o'clock in the morning. I was with about twenty parents, because that day was an important one—the official opening of camp and visiting day.

As we did not wish to wait an hour for a bus, we decided to walk the four miles to camp. We passed through the town, crossed a wide field, and entered the fragrant forest. We passed several camp sites on our way, and finally turned into a path which led towards the river.

Our camp came into sight, still asleep at this early hour. But we were expected. The camp leader, who had noticed us coming down the path, hurried to the gate to meet us, and we were soon drinking hot coffee and eating breakfast with a good appetite.

I was greeted by Comrade Holland, whose place I was now going to take. We strolled across the camp ground, which was really just a fenced-off part of the forest, and she told me how the camp was organized.

'You will find that your job is more that of an adviser than anything else,' she said. 'You are the "pedagogical expert", so to speak. The camp is run by the Pioneer organization and has a good daily time-table. The children's health is looked after most efficiently by the doctor, nurse, and camp-mother.'

'So what am I really to do?' I asked, feeling that I was almost superfluous.

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'Well, you can run a drama circle, go for excursions with the children, keep an eye on the little ones, give advice in the case of any difficulties with the children, attend meetings of the camp staff—in fact, see that the right pedagogical approach is maintained throughout towards the children. Keep your eye on the big girls—there are one or two who are inclined to get above themselves. Don't feel superfluous, there is plenty for you to do, and I am sure that you will have an interesting time.' *

Victor, a boy from the fifth class, ran out of one of the houses, dressed in a pair of shorts, and put a bugle to his lips. Within a few minutes the whole camp was alive. Children came running out, some still finishing their dressing as they came. They all lined up according to height and the gym instructor took charge. After ten minutes of brisk exercise, they all scattered to wash and get ready for breakfast.

I was greeted on all sides by shouts and had difficulty at first in recognizing our pupils, they looked so brown. Elga caught hold of me on one side, and Jimmy on the other. 'We have washed and made our beds, so please come round the grounds with us. Jimmy's father is coming later and is bringing my parents with him in the car,' said Elga. 'Comrade Holland says you are going to stay. Is that true? Good, good, now you will be able to go berrying with us—and swimming. . . .' Chattering away, the children took me over the camp grounds.

The grounds sloped considerably towards the river. We went up a path to the farthest house, where Elga slept. 'Ours is a very nice house,' she said. 'You will sleep here, I suppose, because Comrade Holland slept upstairs with the big girls. We won't go in now, because Jimmy can't come in with us.' They took me behind the house. 'Here is our gym.' And there were swings, bars, and ropes for climbing, as well as a volley-ball pitch. A few children, who had dressed quickly in order to pursue their favourite

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hobby, were practising various stunts. Two were punching the volley-ball about across the net. All looked very jolly, as if they really were enjoying life.

The blast of the bugle was heard from among the trees, and once again everyone poured down to the level patch of ground near the dining-room and lined up in a hollow square. The costume for all was a pair of very short shorts and a shirt or sleeveless blouse. Many boys and most of the little ones confined themselves to shorts only. Almost everyone over the age of ten wore the red tie around their sunburnt necks. In the centre was a tall flag-staff with a small platform at its base.

Sonya stood on the platform, her fair curly hair bleached by the sun, her short white skirt a sharp contrast to her brown legs. She gave the command, 'Unit-leaders, prepare your reports.' The unit leaders, who stood one pace in front of their units, counted up their members and returned to their places. 'Troop leaders, receive your reports,' was the next order. The unit-leaders in turn came up to the troop leader, saluted, and gave some report which I was unable to hear from where I stood against a tree in the background. 'Troop leaders, give your reports.'

Each troop leader, giving his troop the order to stand at attention, came up to Sonya to give the morning report. 'Comrade Pioneer leader on duty,' said the leader of the first troop, 'in the first troop there are thirty-five Pioneers, and all are present. One is without a tie, he says he forgot to put it on.' When the other three troop leaders had made their reports in a similar way, Sonya announced that the second unit of the first troop was on camp duty for the day and gave the order to march to the dining-room. This was done to the sound of the bugle and drums played very energetically by Victor and two other boys.

The breakfast was a plentiful one and the food was prepared by our own school cook and served by our own waitress.

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After the meal, the children scattered once more in every direction, and the unit on duty cleared the tables and then tidied and swept the camp territory.

The young girl in charge of the little ones, of whom there were about fifteen or twenty, gathered them together and disappeared into the woods, accompanied by several of the parents. The remaining children either took their parents on a tour of inspection or retired to make final preparations for the evening, when the celebrations would begin.

A huge pile of brushwood was being carefully arranged by a group of older children on the stretch of grass between our camp and the river. It was here that the camp-fire and sing-song would take place later.

The whole morning was taken up by preparations, so I wandered down to the river through the grass dotted with flowers and admired the beautiful view across the water. The river had a small beach on our side, where it was obviously pleasant to bathe. The forest behind the camp looked cool and inviting. The children had said that it was full of berries and I had promised to go berrying with them the following day. I lazed on the river bank, enjoying the hot sun, until lunch-time, and returned to find the whole camp wrapped in the silence of an afternoon siesta.

Sports were held after tea on the meadow in front of the camp. These included running, jumping, swimming, throwing the discus, and 'chinning' (pulling oneself up by the hands on a parallel bar).

Supper was at seven o'clock, and then came the line-up for the official ceremony of hoisting the camp flag. The camp leader gave a very brief speech from the platform. He welcomed the parents and then addressed himself to the children, telling them to enjoy their holiday, to grow strong in order to have plenty of energy for a good winter of study. They should remember that the rules of the camp were few, that they had helped to make these rules and must therefore respect them.

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After his speech, the chief Pioneer leader Sonya was called upon to hoist the flag, which she did to the sound of bugle and drums. As the red flag climbed up the pole and began to flutter in the breeze, the whole camp burst into song and ended in three cheers.

Ranks were broken, everyone ran for rugs and blankets and made their way to the piled-up camp fire around which they settled. It was not yet dark, and Sonya said that one of the parents who had been in the Red Army during the civil war would tell them a story of his adventures. The story he told could compare with the most thrilling adventure stories and the children listened enthralled and began to clap as he finished.

As he spoke, the sky darkened to deepest blue, the river became a dark ribbon beyond us and evening closed in. One of the boys set a light to the fire and the flames leaped gaily and sparks flew into the air. The story ended, and there was a moment of silence, then Sonya began singing a gay song. Soon everyone joined in and familiar songs followed one another. Children from the village not far off, attracted by the fire and the songs, had been gradually moving towards us. They were cordially invited to join the ring.

One of the older boys got up. 'Comrades, we shall now open our evening's programme. The first item is a dance by Stella.' An accordion began to play and Stella appeared from nowhere, dressed in a peasant costume, and took her place before the fire. She swung into a lively national dance and was much applauded at the end.

'The next item is a short sketch by the third unit of the third troop entitled, "I do not speak German."' This play was very lively and amusing and was very much appreciated. It made fun of those who did not study foreign languages seriously. After this there were many other items; recitations, dances, playlets, songs. The evening passed rapidly and I was much impressed with the quality of the programme.

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Finally, all the rugs were taken up and everybody returned to camp. The flag was lowered for the night, and then they all went to bed.

The visitors climbed into a special bus which was to take them home, and set off. I went to bed with a feeling of satisfaction. I had enjoyed my first day at camp.

Sonya and I left the camp quietly the next morning clad in our bathing suits, with towels over our shoulders. We ran down to the river bank through the dewy grass. It was early, but it was already warm and sunny.

Refreshed and cool from our dip, we made our leisurely way back to camp. I paused to read a notice-board on the wall of the first bungalow.

TIME-TABLE

7.00 a.m.	Rise. Morning drill.
7.15 a.m.	Wash and make beds.
7.45 a.m.	Line-up.
8.00 a.m.	Breakfast.
8.30-11 a.m.	Free time.
11-12 o'clock.	Sun-bathe and swimming.
1 o'clock.	Dinner.
1.30-3 p.m.	Quiet hour.
4.00 p.m.	Tea.
4.30-6.45 p.m.	Free time.
6.45 p.m.	Get ready for Supper.
7.00 p.m.	Supper.
8.30 p.m.	Bed for little ones.
9.15 p.m.	Line-up.
9.30 p.m.	Bed.
10.00 p.m.	Last Bugle.

The morning began as it had the day before. Morning drill, line-up, breakfast. After breakfast, free time. I wandered about the camp in order to get an idea as to how the

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children spent their free time. A group of the bigger boys were gathered round a long wooden table in one corner of the grounds; they were busy making aeroplane models. Two of the boys were making air balloons, which they afterwards sent up by kindling a little fire under them and heating the air inside. A small group of boys and girls were preparing flower beds in another part of the grounds. I came up to them and found that it was a whole unit which had taken upon themselves the job of planting flowers around the camp. They had seeds and plants all ready to be put into the soil. They showed me several beds which they had already made, and in which the transplanted flowers seemed to bloom as if they had always grown there.

Jimmy was doing something with a fishing rod and was assisted by two quite small boys. I found out later that he liked little children and was always doing things for the little ones in the camp. It gave me a greater insight into his character. Jimmy told me that there were fish in the river and that he was going fishing that evening with two boys from the fourth class, who were also fishing enthusiasts. 'I should like to fish all day long,' he said. I was surprised, because I had found him the most restless of pupils at school and should never have imagined that he was capable of sitting still for long periods at a time!

As I continued my wanderings, I saw that everybody was occupied in one way or another. Some were reading in the shade of a tree, others were sitting on the grass and chatting, drawing, or writing, and many were engaged in organized activities such as gardening, aeroplane modelling, practising sports with the gym instructor, or tidying up the camp territory.

At eleven o'clock everyone appeared in a bathing suit, ready to go down to the beach for their sunbathe. The camp doctor accompanied them. The boys lay down in one place and the girls in another not far off. The doctor took her stand between the two groups and gave instruc-

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tions. 'Lie on your backs.' She looked at her watch. 'Turn on your left sides.' 'Turn on to your tummy.' And finally, 'On your right sides.' When they had lain on each side for a few minutes, she called out, 'Into the water!' What a splashing and laughing there was! I enjoyed myself as much as any of the children. The bigger ones formed a chain across the river to prevent the small children from getting beyond their depth. When the little ones came out, the big ones had their turn a little higher up the river, where there was a diving board.

The appetites at dinner time were only satisfied by several plates of soup, a very generous helping of meat, potatoes, and salad, and a plateful of strawberries with sugar.

After dinner the rule was—all on your beds until three o'clock. I was told that for the first few days the rest period had had to be patrolled by the nurse or the doctor or someone of authority as no-one wanted to sleep or even to lie quietly; but by the time I arrived, the habit had already been formed and the majority of children, often to their own great surprise, actually slept for an hour and a half!

After tea I agreed to go to the woods for berries. About twenty-five children turned up, all with cups in their hands. 'To put the berries in,' they explained. 'I brought two cups, so you can have one,' said Vova to me.

It took us ten minutes to get into the part of the forest where berries were plentiful. Victor came with his bugle. 'When you hear the bugle, you must all come back to me,' he explained. 'And remember to call out to each other every few minutes, so that you keep your sense of direction. I shall come with you, comrade,' he said to me, 'and then you can tell me when to blow the bugle.'

In a few moments everyone was busy picking the wild strawberries, raspberries, and blueberries, together with several other kinds, the names of which I did not know. There were whole thickets of raspberry canes. The children's voices resounded through the trees as they called

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out to each other. I soon realized why a cup was ample for collecting the berries. No sooner was a cup full, than its owner sat down on a tree stump and consumed its contents! This done, he or she continued to pick until the cup was full up once more.

The woods were lovely. The dark pines set off the daintiness of the silver birches to perfection. The undergrowth gave way to mossy glades or grassy paths and the sun slanted through the trees, making patches of golden light on the ground. The merry voices of the children could be heard on all sides. A perfect summer day, and still more perfect for the fact that all children could enjoy it. It is noticeable in the summer how few children there are in the large cities. The Soviet Union is a land where the welfare of children comes first, and not the welfare of a privileged group, but of all children.

And so, day by day, life at camp passed in similar fashion. Excursions into the woods, swimming, playing on the beach, working in circles—all out of doors. We had no serious illness, only one or two minor cases of colds and the like were kept isolated for a day or two. The doctor kept a strict eye on the hygiene and health of the camp. The more delicate children were not allowed to go on long excursions, those with a weak heart were kept out of the hot sun, cleanliness was maintained everywhere. The food was excellent and plentiful, the appetites enormous! One or two of the big boys earned a reputation for themselves by their record number of helpings!

The evening line-up was used to sum up the day's activities and to announce plans for the following day. Any infringement of the rules was reported at this time, and no-one liked to hear his name mentioned in this respect in public; one occasion usually served as a corrective far better than any punishment.

Our camp was competing for the red banner of our

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district in Moscow. We were expecting a commission to visit us during the course of the summer. The troop leaders wanted all the pioneers to get sports and first-aid badges. They also decided to have an exhibition of all the models made at camp, the collections of pressed flowers, shells, leaves, and the diaries about the flora and fauna of the district, and also an album of photographs showing all the activities of the different circles and groups. This was made by a keen group of young photographers.

After the commission had come quite unexpectedly, and examined everything thoroughly, their report was awaited with great excitement. 'You have a very good camp,' said the chairman of the commission, 'and I certainly think that you have a chance for the red banner. But, on the other hand, we must say that we have seen other good camps belonging to our district, and it will be a very close competition. Your health record is the best we have seen so far, and that is a great point in your favour.'

When he had finished, a young girl, a member of one of the units and an enthusiastic naturalist spoke. 'Comrades, we are going to win the red banner—we have only to improve a little and continue our plans to the end. If everyone wants to do it, we can, and we must try.' Her face was flushed with excitement, and she was answered from all sides, 'We shall win it!'

And they did win it. The red banner was awarded at a big meeting of Pioneers in Moscow at the beginning of the autumn term, and it hung proudly in the school hall until the following year, when it was returned to the district to be awarded further.

Most of the children were too used to a collective life in the Soviet Union, and far too absorbed and interested in the camp, to cause any trouble or difficulty in the way of discipline. But there were one or two who found it very hard to conform to the rules and who presented certain difficulties to the staff.

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Although at school Jimmy had finally settled down to more or less normal study, at camp he proved something of an individualist. His passion was fishing, which, as he himself said, he wanted to do all day long. And he insisted on doing so at times when he should have been resting or doing his share of duty in the camp territory. A meeting of the camp council was called to discuss Jimmy. His unit leader complained that he could do nothing with him and he was spoiling the record of the unit. Jimmy had nothing to say for himself, and was given a warning that next time he broke any of the rules, his Pioneer tie would be taken away from him.

I was present at this meeting, and, as I took especial interest in Jimmy, due to the fact that I had worked with him a great deal during the previous half-year, I was very keen to help further if I could. I had already observed how fond he was of little children and I decided to use this fact in order to influence him for the good.

The following morning at breakfast I mentioned to Jimmy that I was taking a group of the little ones berrying and should like him to come and help me. 'Of course I'll come,' he said. 'I know where the best berries grow.' He was the most delightful companion on that excursion. He would run off for a few moments and return with his cup and pockets full of berries. He did not eat a single one himself, but gave all his to the smallest children, and pressed some of the best on me. 'I can eat as I go along,' he said. His attitude to the smaller children was that of a kindly elder brother. 'You must always tell me when you are going out with the kids,' he added, 'I'll always come and help you.'

'But I hope you are not going to lose your tie, Jimmy,' I could not help saying, rather anxiously.

'Oh, no, don't worry, I shall not go fishing in the quiet hour again,' but there was an impish grin on his face which rather belied his words.

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'Do you really value your red tie?' I asked. 'Do you really wish to be a Pioneer, or did you become one just because other children belong to the Pioneers?'

'Of course I want to be a Pioneer. It is very interesting in the Pioneer organization. But I do love fishing. Next year I shall not go to camp, I shall go to my aunt instead. She lives in a village a good way from Moscow, and I shall fish all the time.'

But Jimmy could not resist the temptation. In spite of the fact that he was allowed to spend all his free time fishing, and that his unit was only on duty about once in ten days, he persuaded another boy to go fishing with him when their unit was on duty and they should have been helping to look after the camp. The camp council considered the matter more serious because he had led his comrade into breaking the rule, too, and persuaded him to neglect his duties.

That evening, at the line-up, Jimmy's tie was taken off before all his comrades, and I could see tears in his eyes as he went back to his place. His troop leader, who had taken the tie off, made a short speech and said that if Jimmy really wished to get his tie back, he could earn it by taking his share of his unit's duty and by good, comradely behaviour. Jimmy's eyes brightened at that and his face became more cheerful. 'Jimmy, you must get your tie back,' whispered his neighbour. 'Of course I will,' he answered. Although he certainly improved in his social attitude, Jimmy never took his duties seriously and he did not get his tie back at the end of camp. It was only given back to him at school, after he had shown really good progress in his studies and conduct.

Elizabeth was a 'young lady' of fourteen, who had been thoroughly spoilt at home and who had come to camp more because her friends were coming than because she wanted to come herself. She considered it an indignity to be expected to rest in the afternoon, and to go to bed at

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ten o'clock was unheard of in her experience! She was certainly gifted in drawing and painting and spent all her spare time trying to sketch the landscape. She rarely helped her unit when it was on duty, and the Pioneers felt very unsatisfied with her.

She was discussed at a general camp meeting one evening and everyone seemed of the opinion that she should be excluded from the Pioneer organization simply on the grounds that she showed no interest in it and did nothing towards making camp life what it should be.

Elizabeth was very indignant. 'Why do you say that? I *am* interested in the Pioneers and I protest against being expelled from the organization. I am as good as any of the others.'

Helen, her unit leader, who was a member of the sixth class, broke in. 'Why don't you take your share of the work when our unit is in charge of the camp? It isn't as if we had to do some of the hard work. We are not asked to wash up, or to cook, or even to wash our clothes. All we are asked to do is to keep the grounds clean and tidy, give out library books, clear away the tables after meals, and a few other light duties. Also, why do you make fun of some of our camp rules? Why don't you join in any of the camp activities?'

'Yes, you can draw and paint as well, yet you don't even help the wall-newspaper by drawing us a few pictures and illustrating some articles. I asked you so many times and you never helped once,' chimed in the editor of the wall-newspaper.

Elizabeth was silent. She looked very angry. I wondered how she had ever come to be a Pioneer. The camp leader summed up the question and answered Elizabeth's assertion.

'It seems', he said, 'that Elizabeth has not the right attitude towards the collective and that she behaves as no Pioneer should behave. We are very pleased that she

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draws and hope to have a collection of her sketches in the camp exhibition, but she must realize that if people live in a community, everyone has a duty to that community, even the greatest artists. It seems to me that we should take away her tie just because as yet she does not know what it means to be a Pioneer. If, later, she shows a desire to be one, she can always write an application for admission.'

The meeting decided almost unanimously to exclude Elizabeth from the Pioneer organization, and she gave up her tie with a very bad grace. She was still very angry, but I had a suspicion that she was very humiliated underneath.

I awaited further developments in Elizabeth's behaviour. I expected her to continue in her old way, but I was quite mistaken. She had evidently received a severe shock to her vanity, which made her realize that she had not the admiration of her friends that she so obviously wished for. She went to the editor of the camp wall-newspaper and offered her services. She began to do her duties with meticulous care. She lay on her bed every afternoon without a murmur. At the next camp-fire meeting she sang a gypsy song and was much applauded. She was absolutely transformed, as if by magic!

Camp closed on a glorious day late in August. One last swim, one last visit to the woods, a last camp-fire, the biggest and best, with a lively programme to round off the gay holiday. The flag was lowered for the last time and everyone went to bed with lately-won badges under their pillows, too sleepy even to think of the journey home.

The special carriages reserved for us presented a merry sight as we steamed into Moscow, heads hanging out of every window, singing at the top of our voices, then a joyous meeting with parents, and home, ready to begin a good term's work on the first of September.

CHAPTER TEN

Extracts from Wall-Newspapers



A wall-newspaper is issued periodically by a group or body of workers, students, or schoolchildren, and its aim is to improve the standard of work or studies by means of criticism or self-criticism. The editorial board is usually appointed by the trade union committee, or in the case of schoolchildren, by the general meeting of the children.

The newspaper is put together by hand, the articles generally being typed or written out by hand and stuck on to a large sheet of paper. Illustrations of current events cut from magazines or drawn by hand or cartoons dealing with the life of the collective, enliven the newspaper and make it not only more attractive to the eye, but an educative element as well. The paper is hung in a corridor or in some other public place, and there is always a crowd around it, all being keen to see the latest results and progress of their work and what kind of criticisms and suggestions have been made.

Our school wall-newspapers were very lively affairs. We had many good artists among the children and each class had its own paper. In addition, there was one general school wall-newspaper, called 'The School Pravda', where questions of general school interest were discussed. In this newspaper the results of socialist competition were given, termly marks were compared, poor pupils sharply criticized, and current events of interest discussed. Original

EXTRACTS FROM WALL-NEWSPAPERS

poems and short stories were also included and illustrations and cartoons were always plentiful.

'The Teachers' Voice' hung in the staff-room and was a monthly reflection of the work of the school. We, too, had a very good artist on the staff, and there was often a cartoon which hit some weak spot in our work.

I give extracts from various school wall-newspapers issued at different times. They speak for themselves and give a few glimpses into the everyday life of a Soviet school.

ALWAYS READY

Organ of the 4th troop (classes 3 and 4)

5th November 1937

Our Class

The fourth class has done well this term. We made a pledge to have excellent discipline and good results in our work and we have carried it out. Bobbie is the only one who has bad marks in our class. He does not study seriously enough, and often does not do his homework. If he wants to be a Pioneer, he must improve his marks.

We hope to get the red banner at the meeting tomorrow, as we have better results than the other classes.

Nina M. (aged 11½)

Bobbie

Why does Bobbie spoil our class? We must take him up at the first class meeting after the holidays and ask his mother to come to it. I try to help him by reminding him to do his homework, but he is very forgetful. I do not think that he is really bad, but he is a bit lazy. We must help him to get rid of his poor marks in English and Russian.

Vladimir G. (aged 11)

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*The Twentieth Anniversary of the Great October
Revolution*

On the seventh, everybody will go on the demonstration. There will be red flags and slogans everywhere. The whole Soviet Union will celebrate this great holiday.

In our country everyone is happy because everything belongs to the workers. My father is a Stakhanovite¹ and he told me how badly he and his father lived before the Revolution. Now we have a good flat and everything we want.

Long live the October Revolution!

Leon C. (Class 3, aged 9½)

7th November

Last year I was in America and we went to a party to celebrate the anniversary of the October Revolution, but this year I shall march with my father's factory and see the beautiful Red Square with all the red banners and slogans. My father will lift me on to his shoulders and I shall see Comrade Stalin and Comrade Voroshilov. I shall wave my hand and shout hurrah, because it is a joyful day.

Seymour (Class 3, aged 10)

Socialist Competition

The results of the socialist competition between the lower classes of the school are as follows:

Class 2. Everyone passed.

Discipline excellent.

Class 3. Two poors in Russian (George, Svetlana)

One poor in English (Victor)

Discipline excellent except for three days.

Class 4. One poor in English (Bobbie)

One poor in Russian (Bobbie)

Discipline excellent.

¹ A worker who, after the example of Stakhanov, a miner, finds better ways of organizing his work and of raising the standard of production.

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The check-up committee has decided to give two banners. Class 2 certainly deserves one and it gets a red banner, but class 4 has studied very hard and had very good results, so we have decided to give it a red banner also. We only advise it to see that Bobbie studies more seriously next term.

Signed: Seymour (Class 3)
Evelyn (Class 2)
Vladimir (Class 4)
Principal of the School
Third Class Teacher

THE SEARCHLIGHT

Organ of Class 7

End of School Year

Good-bye

I have been in the Anglo-American School for four years and I think that they were the best years of my life. I have learnt so much in every way that I do not know how to express my gratitude to the principal and the teachers of the school.

In America they taught us subjects, but we were never taught the reasons for anything. For instance, we learnt arithmetic and could calculate all right, but we did not know a thing about the theory behind those calculations. We did not know why we were studying at all.

Here we not only know the reasons and understand the theory of the subjects that we study, but our whole life is so interesting. School is a place where we can express ourselves and develop our characters.

Through the art circle I have had the chance to decide that I want to be an artist and although I am now going on to a Russian school for another three years, I shall keep

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up my painting and join an art school when I finish the tenth class.

I know that I shall be able to make my living— there is no unemployment in the Soviet Union and I am so glad that my parents decided to settle here.

Mary (aged 16)

A Suggestion

I should first of all like to express my thanks to the teachers of mathematics and history and geography for their excellent teaching. I have decided to go in for mathematics because I have become so interested in it.

There is one thing I wish to criticize, and that is the way Comrade Grant teaches physics and chemistry. He knows his subjects very well, but he does not take enough interest in his pupils. He does not mark them often enough and he gives far too much homework. We have spoken about these questions many times in class meetings, and the teachers know our opinions about it.

Now we are leaving, we want Comrade Grant to consider our criticism and take it into account for his teaching next year, because we do not want the next seventh class to feel as we do.

Peter (aged 15)

Our Class

Many of us have been together in the same class for several years and we have been a very happy collective. Although, of course, we have had our personal friendships, the class has all the same been united as a whole.

I do not think that any of us will ever forget the interesting theatre outings, the parties and summer excursions that we have had together. Nor shall we forget the stormy arguments which we often had during our class meetings, and which always helped to clear the air and encourage us for further efforts.

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And I, for one, wish to express my deep gratitude and appreciation to our class teacher, Comrade Rogers, who always took such a personal interest in each one of us, and, throughout the years she has been in charge of us, has helped us out of so many of our difficulties and smoothed our way so often. Thank you, Comrade Rogers!

Helen D. (aged 14)

THE TEACHERS' VOICE

No. 7. March

Our Tasks for the Last Term

Next term is the last lap before the tests and we must organize our work so as to help every child to get a thorough grasp of the year's syllabus in every subject. Class advisers should have special talks with their classes on the preparation for tests and help every child to plan the time well ahead.

Teachers should devote at least ten minutes of every lesson to review and go through the whole year's syllabus in this way by the end of next term. They should also begin to prepare their test themes for typing, so that we can pin them on to the board for the children as soon as possible.

Details will be discussed at the next staff meeting; this is just a reminder that it is not too early to begin thinking of next term and that we should plan for it during the spring holiday.

D.L.

Woman's Day

I enjoyed our celebration of Woman's Day on March 8th very much. As this is my first year in the Soviet Union, it was a completely new experience for me.

When I received a present for my little girl, I was extremely touched, as it was a symbol for me that the

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Soviet Government recognizes married women teachers, and honours them. To see all the married women on the staff receiving similar presents for their children made me almost weep for joy at its significance!

The lovely banquet in the evening was another enjoyable experience. The long tables laden with good food, the wine with which we toasted our best women, the guests from our neighbouring factory in their evening dresses, gave the lie right enough to the stories which still circulate abroad about 'starving Russia'.

Yes, friends, that one day was enough to convince any unbeliever that woman in the Soviet Union is the equal of man, and, as a mother, she is honoured and given every consideration.

M.K.

The Trade Union

Why is our trade union committee slacking lately? We were promised eleven o'clock lunches every morning and we were assured that it was an easy matter to organize, yet so far our chairman has not organized the matter. Wake up, Comrade Rogers!

I should also like to criticize the way that theatre tickets are bought and distributed among the members of our collective. It is the duty of the cultural worker to find out the tastes of our members and to encourage people to go to the theatre even if they do not show any particular eagerness to get tickets. Everyone really likes to go to the theatre, or cinema or to a concert, but not everyone will bother to go to buy the tickets unless it is made a simple matter. Comrade Goldberg just buys tickets for those who give her a list and who are most persistent in asking for them. She should use the notice board and post us with information about the latest plays and pictures—we should be able to see at a glance what is going on. We should also

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have a collective visit to the theatre at least once a term.

What about it, Comrade Chairman?

G.C.

(Note.—The above article is justified and its suggestions have been gladly taken. P.R., Chairman of the T.U. Committee.)

Illiteracy

Although I am over fifty and am therefore not bound to study in order to overcome my semi-illiteracy, I was not going to be left out of the classes which were organized by our trade union committee. I can now write a little and can read the newspapers.

On March 8th I received a premium for my work and I am very proud of it. I was also proud to hear the report on the progress of our study classes. We all made a pledge to write an article for the wall-newspaper.

My life was dark before the Revolution, and I was always near to starvation. Now my children are doing well at school and they say to me, 'Wait, mother, until we finish school, and you will not have to work any longer. You will have a wonderful time.' Although I am an unskilled worker and can only look after the coats in the cloakroom, my children will be qualified workers and will earn good salaries.

Shura (cloakroom attendant).

Socialist Agreement

We, the undersigned, agree to enter into socialist competition on the following points, the agreement to terminate at the end of next term:

1. To have 100 per cent passes and at least 50 per cent excellent marks among our pupils. To reduce the marks of 'fair' to a minimum.
2. To call on every child at least twice for oral answers.

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3. To correct notebooks immediately the work has been collected in.
4. To give coaching to pupils in any case of weakness within a week of discovering that weakness.
5. To make careful plans and to complete the syllabus in good time for a thorough review before the tests.

Signed: D.L. (Mathematics)

L.G. (Physics and Chemistry).

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Bad Boys and Girls.



One day I went to visit Comrade Holland at her flat. We had become very good friends and often spent our free time together. She lived in a flat in a large new block, which was surrounded by a pleasant courtyard. In front of the house was grass, and young trees gave promise of shade in a few years.

We were walking down the stairs from her flat on our way out to the street when we saw a group of children on one of the landings. They were making a loud noise, and one of the boys of about thirteen years of age was smoking a cigarette. We immediately stopped and began to talk to the children.

'Why are you smoking?' I asked the boy.

'Smoking is one of the joys of life,' he answered, ironically, with a grin on his face.

'Well, I shall be ashamed to tell American children about you when I get back to New York,' began Comrade Holland. 'They think that children in the Soviet Union are just fine. So much is done for them in this country and they expect the Soviet children to be real examples because of it—and now, look at you.'

The children, at the word 'America', came clustering round us. 'Tell about America, please,' they said eagerly. Comrade Holland, with an eye on the smoker, continued to talk. She described the skyscrapers of New York.

'We know that, we learn it at school,' they interrupted. 'Tell us how the children live—do they go to schools like

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ours? Do they have summer camps? Are there Pioneers in America?’

‘You must come to our school, we have many American children there and they will tell you all that you want to know. I shall give you the address. Now, you tell me, why do you let your friend smoke? I can see that many of you are Pioneers. How do you spend your free time? Have you no Red Corner in this house?’

One of the boys answered. ‘Yura is a bad boy. His mother died several years ago and he does not listen to his father. We have no Red Corner in our house, though we asked the house committee to give us one. They promised to do so, but it has not been opened yet.’

‘I shall help you,’ said Comrade Holland. ‘Yura will show me where the house committee is and we shall speak about the matter. Meanwhile tell me what you would like to do in the Red Corner?’

‘Chess.’

‘A sewing circle.’

‘A drama circle.’

‘A sports group.’

It was evident that the children knew what they wanted, so quick were their replies.

‘I must go now,’ said Comrade Holland, ‘but tomorrow morning Yura and I will go down to the house committee and see what we can do. Do you agree, Yura?’

‘All right,’ he agreed.

‘Meanwhile, if any of you wish to visit our school after lessons at any time, here is the address,’ and she wrote it on a piece of paper and gave it to one of the children. ‘Good-bye, we shall see you again soon,’ we said, as we left.

‘Good-bye, good-bye,’ they shouted, as we made our way downstairs.

The next morning, it being free day,¹ Comrade Holland

¹ Soviet workers used to work five days and rest on the sixth.

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and Yura went to see the chairman of the House Committee. 'How is it that such a large house as ours, and a new one at that, has no clubroom for children?' she began.

'Oh, yes, a Red Corner? We are going to open it for May 1st.'

'You do not need to wait two months before opening it. It is needed now. Here our young friends are beginning to smoke and make a nuisance of themselves, and you are thinking of May 1st. No. The Red Corner must be opened to-morrow. I shall spend every evening this week in helping to arrange it, together with Yura and his friends. That will give you time to find someone to run the place for you.'

'But it is impossible to do things so quickly. There is no furniture, the room has to be thoroughly cleaned. . . .'

'Everything is possible to those who wish to do it,' interrupted Comrade Holland. 'People did not talk like that in 1917, when they had to make a revolution. Greater tasks have been accomplished in less time. You let me have some money, and I shall see about getting the most necessary furniture.'

Her determination won the day, and she was shown the room intended for the children. It was none too large, but it would do for a beginning. Yura lighted a cigarette as they went upstairs, with a sidelong glance at his companion, but she said nothing; in fact, she went on as if nothing out of the ordinary had happened.

'Yura, find two other boys or girls and come into my room for a while. We shall arrange our plans for opening the room. I have three hundred rubles which the chairman gave me towards furniture and curtains, and we shall have to go shopping this afternoon. We must also elect a committee from among the children for running the club. That can be done at the first meeting, when we open it.'

I arrived at the door of Comrade Holland's flat just as Yura came down the corridor with a boy and a girl whom

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he had brought along for the conference. We sat down and made out a list of what to buy with the first lot of money. We decided on a long table and twelve chairs, curtains, six chess sets, a small billiard set (called Chinese billiards, a children's game), draughts, and dominoes. We also decided to ask the house committee to prepare a volley-ball court in the courtyard and to buy a net and two balls. Yura became enthusiastic when it came to volley ball.

The girl suggested a sewing group and I offered to come once a week to help them to get going. 'And we must have a wall-newspaper,' said Boris, the other boy. 'We can ask Lena and Mark to be the editors, if the others agree—they draw so well, and Lena can write well, too. Let us get out a newspaper for the opening of the Red Corner! My father has already promised to start off a chess tournament as soon as we are ready, and my big sister, who is at the university, says that she will help us once a week with pleasure. She is very good at plays and will help us to form a drama circle.'

In this way the children of the house became absorbed in the organization of what they felt to be their own club. Yura became one of the prominent members of the group. He looked after the table games and saw that the room was kept in good order, and, what is very significant, brought home a report at the end of the term which showed that his marks were definitely on the up-grade and that his discipline, which had been poor the previous term, had become good.

Just a small thing—the giving of a room to a group of children, and the whole house felt the difference! No more shouting on the stairs, no more smoking, no more aimless wandering. The Red Corner was always full of children, unless the weather was fine enough for the activities to be carried on outside. Parents took turns to help with the cleaning of the room and helped to run various activities. There were gay pictures on the walls, painted by the

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children themselves. The house committee also took a great interest in the club and saw that there was a small monthly sum provided for current expenses.

Not long after our adventure with Yura and his friends a decree was passed enjoining all house committees to provide a Red Corner for the children in their block of flats, as this had been proved one of the best ways of keeping children out of 'mischief' in their spare time.

At every police station there is a children's room to which lost children or those discovered breaking local rules can be brought. These children's rooms are presided over by policemen with a training in psychology and a good knowledge and experience of children. Their job has a very wide educative purpose, and plays an important part in the educational system of the country.¹

During the spring and winter holidays and on free days during the term, teachers from the schools in the district take turns to be on duty in the children's room as assistants to the person in charge. Young people of the top classes of the local schools also take it upon themselves as social work to help in the children's rooms, and the person in charge often has a brigade of young people definitely attached to him, who, under his direction, do excellent work.

Our school was given two days of one of the winter holidays for duty at the police station. I offered to do my share, and I spent an extraordinarily interesting half-day. The young man in charge of the children's department impressed me as being the right person for the job. He spoke to the children in a quiet, friendly voice, firmly and with the obvious ease of a person used to dealing with children. He got the information he needed out of them and their parents without bullying or even raising his voice.

I found that I was expected to talk to any children who

¹ In the Soviet Union the police are called 'militia'.

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might be brought in, while they were waiting for their parents to arrive, or for their turn to be questioned. I was asked to find out as much as possible about their home conditions, what school they attended and how they liked school—in short, to find any possible reasons for their doing whatever it was that had brought them to the station.

The room was furnished with a desk, a divan, and several chairs. These were for business purposes. For the purpose of amusing the children who were waiting for their parents, there was a low table with several small chairs, table games, a set of Chinese billiards, and a bookshelf full of attractive books for children of all ages.

The first child to be brought in was a small boy of about ten years of age; he was brought by a caretaker (each house has its caretaker) who reported that while he was sweeping the pavement in front of his house he had noticed this boy, together with another still smaller, hanging on to the back of a lorry. The smaller boy had run away from him, but he thought he should bring this one to the police station because he was endangering his own and his companion's life by this very dangerous trick. He left the boy, who was crying noisily, and went back to his work.

'Come over here,' said the police officer in a friendly tone, pointing to a chair next to his desk. The boy sat down, still crying. 'Stop crying, we are not going to do anything to you. I only want to make sure that you will not do such a foolish thing again, because it is very dangerous, you know. Tell me your name and address and explain why you were hanging on to the lorry. Who was the boy with you? Why don't you go to school? Surely your school has many interesting activities going on during the holidays? What is the number of your school?'

He spoke calmly, giving the child a chance to quieten down. The child told him his name and address and he immediately dispatched a member of his brigade to bring

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the mother. The boy had evidently been joy-riding with his younger brother. Another member of the brigade, a jolly-looking girl of about seventeen, invited the boy over to the table and persuaded him to play a game with her while he waited for his mother to come.

Within twenty minutes the mother arrived, looking extremely worried. She was relieved to find that her son was quite whole. The officer told her the circumstances and criticized her for not supervising her children more carefully. The boys should be sent to school every day if she had no means of keeping them amused at home. At school they would be well taken care of and would find plenty to do in the different circles there. He himself would ring up the school and inform them of the whole story. He would also ring her up in a few weeks to see how the boy was behaving.

When the mother and boy had left, he called up the school and gave the director a piece of his mind. 'How is it that your teachers do not popularize the club activities of your school before the holidays begin? You know that the reason for turning the schools into clubs during the holidays is to keep the children busy and off the streets, and here is one of your boys endangering his life by hanging on to the back of a lorry. Please look into the matter and let me know about the boy.'

In a few moments the telephone bell rang. The doorkeeper of a shop had caught a young girl picking pockets. What should he do? 'Bring her along,' was the order. Before long she arrived accompanied by the doorkeeper. She was about fourteen years of age, and very defiant. She denied everything and sat down in sullen silence while her parents were sent for. The doorkeeper described how he had caught the girl picking a woman's pocket. Suddenly she began to speak. She said that she never stole, but the girl in the next house to hers was a regular thief. She launched into a description of that girl, speaking very fast.

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‘How is it you know so much about this girl?’ asked the police officer.

‘Well, I go out with her sometimes,’ was the reluctant admission.

At this moment both the girl’s parents arrived and were invited to sit down. When they had heard all the facts, the father thumped his fist on the table. ‘She is a bad girl and deserves a thrashing. She knows it is against the law to beat children, or she would have had the kind of beating I used to get when I was a boy. For thirty years I have been an honest worker and never once have I been called before the police until now.’

‘Have you any idea how she could have begun to steal?’ asked the officer. ‘She talks about a girl who lives next door to you. Do you know her?’

‘Yes, she is a bad girl, too, and I have told Maryusa many times not to associate with her, but she disobeys me. She also misses school very often and influences my daughter to do the same. Maryusa has very bad marks for her studies because of this and I am afraid that she will have to repeat the class again next year. What can I do with her?’ and the father shrugged his shoulders.

‘First of all, Maryusa must go to school regularly. You must see to that. Her mother must also supervise her homework and see that she does it every day when she comes home, and she must stay at home in the evenings unless she goes out with one of her parents. Maryusa must give me her word that she is not going to steal any more. I shall keep a watch on her and she must come to see me in a month’s time. I shall also telephone regularly to her school to find out if she is attending properly and studying hard. What have you to say, Maryusa?’

‘I never stole a thing,’ once more asserted Maryusa.

‘But will you try to study better at school? Or would you prefer to go to one of our labour communes?’

‘No, I shall study,’ was the answer.

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When they had gone, the police officer turned to me.

'Must be a bad school that she attends; we still have some like that in Moscow. We have not yet completely caught up with the lack of qualified teachers. That will come in good time. Maryusa's class adviser must be awakened to her duties. I shall have to visit the school to-morrow. And then the parents—that is a very big problem. We have to educate them, too. This father is evidently a good honest man, but he obviously does not know how to deal with his daughter. Well, anyhow, I am sure Maryusa will be all right. I know some of the bigger children in her school and they will help her.'

'All these cases are just temporary problems,' he went on, as no-one else appeared to claim his attention, and he had time for a smoke. 'When we have everything that we plan to have, when our parents are educated, when there are enough crèches, kindergartens, and schools, enough libraries and theatres for the children, and enough green spaces and courtyards for them to play in, all these problems will cease to exist. You just wait a few more years and, if only war doesn't break out, we shall realize that which so far has only been the dream of idealists. We shall have a paradise for children in our Soviet land.'

'Do you have many serious cases brought to you? And when you do, what measures do you take?' I asked.

'We have very occasional cases of hardened thieves. These children are usually just the unfortunate victims of circumstances. We send such children to the communes run by the Commissariat of Home Affairs, and turn them into real men and women. But such cases are becoming rarer. People are becoming better off, there is no unemployment, therefore there is less incentive to rob others in order to live. Our most usual problems are such as you have seen to-day—hanging on to the back of lorries, riding on trams without paying the fare, rudeness to police on duty—all these questions need simple educational

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methods and measures are taken through the schools and in co-operation with the parents.'

At nine o'clock we closed up the room and went home. The police officer had put the case very simply. The Soviet Union is creating conditions in which it will be totally unnecessary and impossible to become a criminal, in which everyone will be able to lead the life he or she wishes as a useful member of society. Whatever shortcomings may still exist, whatever mistakes are still being made, the basis is there, the basis of equality of opportunity, the basis of the ownership of everything by the workers themselves. With such a foundation, anything can be achieved.

CHAPTER TWELVE

What Became of Our Old Scholars



There is no unemployment in the Soviet Union and there is an unlimited demand for qualified workers of every description. The only difficulty any young boy or girl may have when choosing a profession is the wide variety of professions open to them.

As the school is so closely connected with the development of Soviet society, every child is intensely aware of the tremendous inventions and discoveries taking place in his country every day, and is very much inspired by them. The school also gives wide opportunities to every child to develop any artistic or creative talent which he or she may have. In this way most children have a clear idea of what they wish to be before they reach the age of fifteen or sixteen, and work steadily towards their aim. Future artists attend art schools after school hours, young would-be engineers construct and often invent machines at their district technical centres, and future musicians and dancers are either transferred to the special schools or are attached to classes after school hours.

Everything is done to help those who have not been able to make up their minds. Public lectures are organized towards the middle of the school year for tenth-class pupils. These lectures are given by eminent professors who put forward the advantages of taking up their subjects at the universities or by doctors who try to interest young people in their profession (though not by deceiving them

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with too rosy pictures, for doctors must have good nerves and a great love for their work); teachers explain the joys and difficulties of their work, while technicians, engineers, architects, outstanding workers in factories and all aspects of industry try to help the undecided pupils to choose something out of the endless possibilities presented to them.

One of the most popular professions both for boys and girls is aviation, whether it is to be a pilot or an aviation engineer. Geology is another attraction, opening up vistas of exploration in remote parts of the Soviet Union in search of new ores and other riches to be found in the bowels of the earth. Engineering presents wonderful possibilities of building roads, railways, and bridges in hitherto wild parts of the country, while architecture gives its devotees chances of building whole new towns and cities in the rapidly developing new centres of industry.

Until a year or two ago it was difficult for the medical and teaching professions to attract a sufficient number of students to their colleges, because other professions afforded wider scope, but since the sharp rise in pay in these two professions and the improvement in conditions of work, they have become as popular as the others. It almost seems as if in a few years' time there will be a shortage of unskilled labour! But the Soviets will find a way of remedying such a difficulty, especially as under the rule of the Soviets machines are the servants of man and are used to relieve him as far as possible of a maximum amount of processes in his work.

Within a few years, ten years of education will be compulsory for all. Now every child must go through seven classes from the age of eight to fifteen. On completion of the seventh class the pupils have the choice of passing into the eighth class and so on up to the tenth class, or of entering some technicum, where, in addition to a general course of education, there is definite specialization. While study-

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ing at a technicum, the student receives a monthly stipend and the possibility of living in a hostel. It is possible in this way to qualify as a technical editor, a translator, a technician, or, on completion, to pass into a higher institute and continue to study there.

If any boy or girl does not wish to continue higher than the seventh class, he or she is at liberty to begin work, though it is usual for any enterprise employing such young people to give them a year's training first. One of our girls, who knew Finnish and English, went to work in Moscow's biggest store as a sales girl. She was sent to their school for a year's training first and her languages were considered an asset, since many foreigners come to shop in this store.

Anybody at any time may join an evening school in any subject he wishes, and either change his profession or become more highly qualified in his own. Any worker of outstanding ability may be sent to the university at the expense of the enterprise at which he works, and continues to receive his usual monthly salary.

Those pupils who choose to complete their ten years of study at school, and who pass the examinations of the tenth class with the mark of excellent in the main subjects, and good in subjects such as gym, music, and art, are accepted into the university or any institute without an entrance examination. Those with lower marks must pass an entrance examination which is not competitive but which requires a definite standard for a pass. All students in the universities and higher institutes receive a stipend which rises each year, and, if they come from another city, may be given a place in the hostel belonging to the institute where they are studying.

We found that the majority of the children in our school chose to continue their studies through to the tenth class. The others often went to a technicum and a small minority went to work after the seventh class, though none of them

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stopped studying but attended evening courses or joined groups or circles at their places of work.

To take a typical group of about thirty boys and girls who finished the seventh class of our school during my time there, twenty elected to go on to the eighth class. On finishing the tenth class, they all entered the university or some higher institute. Of the rest, one went to work at the Stalin Automobile Plant, where he joined the factory school, working four hours a day and studying the rest; another, a girl, joined the factory school of a textile mill, and became an expert at the looms. One girl, who was a champion swimmer, could not decide whether to take up physical training or become a draughtswoman because she was good at drawing, too. She finally decided on the latter, but spent all her free time on swimming and other kinds of sport. One American girl who did not know Russian well, went to the technicum of foreign languages and qualified as a teacher of English, while another became a translator. One of the boys was very clever and passed the entrance examination for the Institute of Foreign Languages and will become a teacher of English at the age of nineteen. A boy and a girl took up dramatic work and dancing.

From among those who went to the university or higher institutes, one took up medicine, one passed into a naval school, where he will qualify as the captain of a cargo boat on the Black Sea. Several took up chemistry and physics at the Moscow University, and another joined the Writers' Institute.

Whatever they chose, they were able to take up—that is the most important thing to realize in connection with children leaving school in the Soviet Union. If anyone finds that he or she has made a mistake in choosing a profession, it is possible to change at any time. It is this security of the Soviet youth, based on the knowledge that in a Soviet system there can never be unemployment of any kind, that makes the happy faces one meets everywhere

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among them. They are doing the job that interests them, they are enjoying all the privileges accorded to Soviet citizens, they are building a system of society which only exists to benefit all its members, and they know that whatever happens, their future is secure.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Trade Union



When I had been at the school for about a year, I was elected on to the school trade union committee. As I have said before, the trade union appeared to be a kind of fairy godmother to its members. The chairman of the committee seemed personally interested in everyone's welfare and was always ready to listen to difficulties and give advice and help.

It was my task as committee member to look after the 'production' of the collective. That is, I had to see that the members of the trade union were good workers and carried out their social obligations as well. I had to check up the socialist agreements and pledges made by any who wished, and I was expected to give a report on my work once a month at committee meetings and occasionally at general trade union meetings, too. Some of the pledges were not easy to check, and involved a lot of work. For instance, a typical pledge might be as follows:

'I pledge to fulfil the following points by the end of the term:

1. To eliminate all poor marks.
2. To be thoroughly prepared for every lesson.
3. To coach every weak pupil immediately he or she shows signs of weakness.
4. To have model notebooks.

Signed'

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In order to check such a pledge, it was necessary to examine the class mark-books and notebooks, and also the teacher's weekly plan books. As there were many pledges and socialist agreements, I had to organize good methods of checking up, or I should have had to spend an enormous amount of time on it. I evolved a system of charts, which I hung in the staff-room and on which each member of the staff could mark his own progress weekly. These charts showed clearly how the different members of the collective stood in relation to one another, which ones were fulfilling their points and who was lagging behind. They thus served as an additional incentive to all, for no-one likes to see himself at the bottom of any list, whatever it may be!

This type of social work interested me very much because it gave me an insight into the general working of the school and made it necessary for me to undertake a thorough study of the work of each individual member of the staff. Not only did I have to check up the work of the teachers, but also the socialist agreements between the school cleaners and the cloakroom attendants. I had to examine the order in the classrooms after they had been cleaned, see whether they kept a regular supply of chalk whenever necessary, refilled the inkwells in good time, kept the blackboards well cleaned, rang the bells strictly on time, and organized their work in the cloakrooms in such a way that it ran smoothly and nothing was lost. My work even carried me into the stokehole and the kitchen. I often found that the non-teaching staff set a good example to the teachers in their keenness on socialist competition and took a tremendous interest in all results when they were reported at the monthly meeting. This is especially interesting in as much as socialist agreements were purely voluntary, only those who wished entering upon them.

Some months after I had been elected to the committee, the chairman left the school and I was elected in

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her place. It was now my turn to be the 'fairy godmother'! I felt rather inadequate for the job, but I was assured that I would soon learn the ropes and that it would be a very good experience for me. And so it proved. Before she left, my predecessor took me to the district trade union committee and introduced me to the chairman, who promised to help me whenever I might be in difficulties. As the district trade union offices were just round the corner from our school, I felt more confident, knowing that I could procure his help very easily. I was also taken to the regional trade union committee, which was situated in a large building very near the centre of the city. Here I was introduced to a most charming woman, with whom I became friends in a very short time. She later told me her history—she had been an illiterate peasant in a remote village and had been enabled by the Soviet power to receive a good education which eventually qualified her for a responsible post in the teachers' trade union.

Trade unions in the Soviet Union are divided according to professions, and every institution has its own local committee. Every worker, however, who receives pay from that institution, irrespective of the job he or she may be doing, is a member of the same trade union. We, in our school, belonged to the trade union of the elementary and secondary schools, and thus, all the workers on our pay-roll, whether they were cleaners, book-keeper, teacher or caretaker, belonged to that trade union and were eligible for election on to the local committee. No member of the administration, however, is eligible for office on the trade union committees.

As our school was a small one, we had a committee of three—the chairman, the cultural worker, and the secretary, who also checked the 'production' of the collective. Each of these members could, with the agreement of the committee, delegate some of the work to other trade union members, who would undertake these jobs as part

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of their social work. When I was chairman I had as my co-workers a Russian teacher, who was responsible for the cultural work, and one of the school cleaners, who did the work that I had done formerly—that is, checked the results of socialist agreements and pledges.

The functions of the cultural worker were very wide. First and foremost, she provided facilities for study for all those who wished for them. We had several classes; the English and American teachers studied Russian, the Russian teachers studied English, the semi-literate members of the collective studied Russian, arithmetic, and other subjects, a group studied and passed the tests for the first-aid badge, another group joined the district sports group. The second important function was to provide facilities for recreation. All our members, like most people in the Soviet Union, were very keen on the theatre, and theatre tickets are very difficult to obtain in Moscow, due to the large demand. So our cultural worker had to supply us with tickets. She was attached to a special theatre booking office through the district trade union, and in this way was able to obtain most of the tickets demanded. She also arranged periodic collective visits to museums, cinemas, and the theatre, and the whole staff together enjoyed such plays as *Romeo and Juliet*, *Intervention*, *The Inspector General*, *The Cherry Orchard*, and many others. In addition, individuals or small groups were supplied regularly with tickets for the plays which they wished to see.

Another function of the cultural workers was to encourage everyone to read the newspapers and keep up with current events, also to see that all facilities were provided for obtaining a plentiful supply of literature of all kinds, either in our own school library, or from public libraries. In short, the cultural worker was responsible for seeing that no aid for cultural development was denied the staff. She had two assistants who helped her in the matter of tickets and literature, and between them they managed

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to give great satisfaction. At the meeting at the end of the school year, our cultural worker was unanimously voted a real *udarnik*¹ for her excellent social work.

The trade union committee met twice a month at a regular time which was known to all. We always welcomed anyone who wished to listen to our discussions and we listened to any contributions visitors wished to make. At these meetings we discussed finances (the local trade union is given 1 per cent of the pay-roll of the institution), the kind of cultural work to develop among our members, which members were lagging behind in the fulfilment of their work, what to provide for the holidays, which members to premium, and so on. All the main points were brought up for general discussion at the monthly trade union meetings which all members were expected to attend.

The trade union committee helped those members who wished to choose what kind of social work they were going to do, and also helped with the wall-newspaper. Social work was of various kinds—editing the wall-newspaper or being a member of its editorial board, collecting union dues monthly, filing newspapers, running a bulletin board, giving English lessons to Russian members of the staff or Russian lessons to English-speaking members, or any special work that a member might care to suggest for himself. One of our Russian teachers ran the class for the semi-literate members of the staff, another teacher helped the librarian and the children's library group to catalogue new books and mend old ones. The nurse prepared a group of teachers for the first-aid badge. There was not a member of our staff who did not wish to carry out some kind of social work.

During my year of office I was called upon to help our trade union members in many ways. These included placing the child of one of our workers in a crèche, obtain-

¹ *Udarnik*—Russian for shock-worker.

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ing several passes to rest homes from trade union headquarters for teachers and other workers for the holidays, helping one member to find a room (not an easy task in Moscow!) and in general listening to any difficulties that arose during the course of work and giving advice whenever it was sought.

The trade union committee usually gave a banquet during the May and November holidays, and organized a special party on March 8th, in honour of Woman's Day. We arranged parties and evenings for New Year and any other festive season, either at our school or jointly with another school; we also organized many outings and excursions throughout the year.

I attended regular meetings called by the district committee of the trade union, when all the chairmen of the local school committees would come together and compare notes or listen to some speech of general interest, or receive instructions for the carrying out of preparations for holidays or the choosing of best teachers for premiums.

I had a discussion of long standing with the chairman of our district committee about unpunctuality. Our meetings always started late, an hour, or even an hour and a half, late. It was no good coming late myself, because somehow, if I came an hour late, I should be sure to find that the meeting had begun only half an hour late! So I always came punctually, and therefore wasted a lot of time. I insisted over and over again that teachers, above all, should be on time. They would never dream of coming late to school, or to a lesson; that was proof enough that they could be punctual when necessary. I spoke about this at every opportunity at the meetings and, at a general meeting of our district trade union, I plucked up courage enough to make a short speech in my halting Russian, and I included this point. Whether it was partly due to my efforts, I cannot say, but the fact is that after this meeting, our meetings began within ten or fifteen minutes of the appointed time,

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and on one occasion, when I had been unavoidably detained and arrived five minutes after the meeting had begun, I was greeted by good-natured teasing on all sides—the greatest agitator for punctuality was late herself!

Although I used to talk such a lot about punctuality, it was almost my only bone of contention. I found these district meetings most helpful in giving me instructions about my trade union work at school. I also took advantage of the consulting hours which the chairman had every other day. I came to him with many difficulties which I encountered in my trade union work, and he always listened with great interest and gave good advice. Occasionally he would attend our local monthly meetings at the school, although he knew very little English and everything had to be translated to him.

The teachers' trade union was one of the means of bringing together teachers of different schools. There would be a quarterly general meeting at one of the district schools, there would be a party once a term for the best teachers of the district, with an enormous banquet such as only the Russians know how to provide, followed by national dancing and jazz. Or the teachers of one school, through their trade union committee (who would provide the funds) would invite the teachers of one or two other schools for a social evening. Here, in the true Russian way, everyone would sit round the tea or supper table and sing one lovely haunting folk-song after the other, in perfect time and tune and in several parts, or someone would lead in one of the new Soviet songs, so full of life and joy, all the rest joining in immediately, without printed music or words. After the meal an accordion would strike up some Russian dance and the room would be a mass of whirling couples or a ring of lively people.

In the summer there would be mass excursions. Sometimes a ship would be chartered for the day and we would leave early in the morning, drift down the Moscow River,

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picnic on one of its banks, bathe and rest; and return in the warm June night; sometimes it would be a trip by train into the forest which surrounds Moscow, to a spot by the river where there would be bathing, games, and a picnic; and very often there were interesting evenings at the teachers' club where one could hear concerts, lectures and plays, or see the latest films, free.

The trade union committee was sometimes called upon to arbitrate between a member of the trade union and the administration. In our school there were one or two cases of a teacher receiving a written reprimand from the principal for bad work. The teacher thought the reprimand unmerited, and brought the whole question before the trade union committee. It was the business of the committee to hear the statement of the teacher and that of the principal and then to discuss the whole question in their presence and with their participation. At the close there would be a resolution and the committee members would vote on it. If the decision of the trade union reversed the principal's decision, and the principal still disagreed, the question would be referred to a higher authority, that of the district board of education and the district trade union committee. Their decisions would be final for both parties.

At the yearly election meetings either in the schools or in the district, the chairman of the retiring committee had to make an exhaustive report of the work of the past year, in which, of course, the successes and failures had to be mentioned. This report was then discussed very fully by the members, and the shortcomings of the report and of the work of the committee were strongly criticized, though the criticisms had to be constructive, and include suggestions for the elimination of shortcomings. I was not eligible for re-election at the end of my term of office, as I was at that time appointed to the position of supervisor and so became a member of the administration.

My work had given me a good insight into the work of

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the Soviet trade unions, the aim of which is to improve the conditions of the workers, hand in hand with the administration, and to co-operate with the administration in improving the quality of the work done by all trade union members.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

A Teacher's Holiday



Every Soviet teacher is entitled to two months holiday with full pay in the summer, and the trade union is always ready to advise and help in the planning of this holiday to the best advantage. Soviet workers do not consider a holiday spent at home as a real holiday, and they all make a point of going away, either to sanatoria¹ or rest-homes, or to the country or seaside.

In the summer of 1935 another teacher of our school and I decided to take a holiday together. We wanted to go south, where the heat and the stories of the beauty of the Caucasus attracted us; we also wanted to see as much of the Soviet Union as possible, and we wanted, of course, to have a very good time and a rest!

We first of all consulted the chairman of our trade union committee. We told her exactly what we wanted, and she advised us to go down to the offices of the Proletarian Tours Society and consult one of their specialists, whose job it was to help people to plan holidays. She telephoned for us and found out the hours for consultation, and we went down.

The offices of Proletarian Tours were gaily decorated with posters, maps, and information about all kinds of tours, varying from a visit to the arctic circle by steamer to a trip through the wild mountains of Swantia, in the Caucasus, where the air is only cool because of the height

¹ A sanatorium in the U.S.S.R. is not only for tubercular patients. It may specialize in cures for almost any disease.

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of the ranges. A large oval table contained books and leaflets from which several people were copying notes or looking up information. At one end the consultant was talking to a group of young people, evidently students. They seemed to be discussing the relative merits of a trip in canoes down the Kama River, and a hike on foot over the Georgian military highway.

We wandered around the room until the students had finished, and then we sat down and took our turn. We explained what we wanted, adding that as it was our first holiday of the kind, we wanted to see as much as possible.

'I should suggest a trip by steamer down the Volga,' said the consultant, bringing out a map. 'You could go from Gorky to Stalingrad, take a train from there to Sochi, and stay at our hostel there for as long as you wish. You may buy a pass for ten days there before you leave, but you may always stay longer if you like the place. Or you could go for a trip down the Dnieper and end up in the Crimea, which is also very beautiful.'

We decided on the Volga trip. We bought the tickets then and there and also two passes for the hostel in Sochi. We felt thrilled to have finally decided to make a journey to the south, also it was our first adventure in the Soviet Union away from anyone who spoke our own language.

We left Moscow by train in the early part of June in a blaze of afternoon sunshine. Our destination was Gorky, which we reached the following morning. As our boat was not due to leave until the evening, we took our luggage to the wharf and left it in the luggage office, and then set off to look round the town.

We climbed a steep winding road and reached the top of the high bank of the Volga, on which part of Gorky lies. This part is both very old and very new and gives a real picture of pre- and post-revolutionary conditions. We walked over to the Intourist hotel and asked to see the

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manager. We had decided to ask his advice as to the best way of seeing Gorky in so short a time. He met us with extreme cordiality and offered us a cool drink of mineral water while he listened to us. He immediately called one of his interpreters, made out a list of suggestions as to what to see, and, to our great surprise and pleasure, insisted on taking us round for a few hours himself.

We got into his car, together with the interpreter, and set off. We saw all the interesting sights of Gorky, both old and new, we were taken into the beautiful new theatre, we stopped in several places at random and wandered in and out of shops, and we ended up with a ride along the river-side. The view from the high bank over the broad Volga at its junction with the River Oka was imposing. We felt eager to begin our trip.

The friendliness of the hotel manager, and his kindness in showing us his town (for which service, incidentally, he would not take a kopek), was typical of the treatment that we met with throughout our holiday, and we were always given every opportunity to go wherever we wished and to see whatever we wanted.

We embarked at six o'clock and were given a double cabin overlooking the deck. It was small, but comfortable, and as the boat began to glide down the river we could see through the window the high right bank standing out in sharp outline against the sky. The left bank is so low and flat that the trees on it often seem to grow right out of the water.

I had never been on so broad a river before; in fact, when I realized that we were as much as three thousand kilometres from the mouth, I wondered how broad it could be farther down!

In the evening we strolled round the deck and observed our fellow travellers. We made the acquaintance of four musicians who told us that they were members of the Leningrad Philharmonic and that they were going down to

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Baku to join the rest of the orchestra. They had been engaged to give a series of concerts there during the summer. These four had decided to go by water, down the Volga to Astrakhan and then across the Caspian Sea by sea steamer. During our five days on the river we had many interesting conversations with this group about Soviet music and music in general, and when we left the boat we received a cordial invitation to visit Leningrad and hear its famous Philharmonic.

Another interesting person on the boat was a former river pilot, who knew the Volga intimately, and many were the interesting stories he told us. He lived in Saratov and promised to show us round his town when we came to it. Unfortunately our boat only stopped there in the early hours of the morning, so we were obliged to postpone our visit.

There was a troupe of puppeteers on board with a very good puppet theatre. They gave a performance for the crew and for as many of the passengers as could squeeze into the saloon. They, too, were going to the south for the summer season, having been engaged by the council of a town where there were many children's rest homes and sanatoria. And many other interesting people of all sorts helped to make our trip extremely enjoyable. Every day we stopped several times at small landing stages for ten or fifteen minutes to leave and take on mail, and at the larger towns, such as Kazan, Kuibishev (former Samara), and Stalingrad, we stopped for several hours.

At the smaller stops we always went off to buy fresh fruit and berries from the stalls set up on the landing stage, and at the large stops we went off into the town to stroll around and wander into the shops and interesting buildings.

We were struck by two things—the cleanliness of the streets, the shops, and the people, and the fresh bright clothes of the men and the women. The men as well as the

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women favoured white linen and wore embroidered shirts and white trousers which were always spotlessly clean.

At the minor stops many peasants got on the boats and travelled to the towns, many also travelled from the towns and got off at the small places. They were not at all well dressed and we wondered why they were moving about in this way. Imagine our surprise to see among the luggage of those coming away from the towns such articles as sewing-machines and gramophones. One man had a brand-new bicycle.

'You don't expect the peasants to travel in their best clothes, do you?' said the pilot, when we remarked to him on these facts. 'Of course, we have not got everything in the village yet, so the peasants have to come into the town for some of the things they want to buy. The collective farmer will one day work in silks and velvet, you will see! It is only a question of time now, and the difference between town and country will be wiped out. Agriculture has been put on its right basis, and every collective farmer will soon be well-to-do.'¹

And so the days passed. We spent the time between the stops in sunbathing on the upper deck, or reading in a shady corner, or chatting lazily with our new-found friends while we admired the beautiful scenery. The food was excellently prepared. The cook was an expert in serving dainty Volga dishes of various river fish and delicious dessert. The only time I met his equal was on the *Sibir* on my way from Leningrad to London.

We were due to arrive in Stalingrad at five o'clock in the morning of the sixth day out from Gorky. We rose at four o'clock, packed our cases, and went on deck. We watched the light ripples of the Volga as we approached our destination. The right bank still towered above the water, or broke into pine-covered hills, and far on our left lay the

¹ Since 1935 still further progress has been made in the villages, where the collective farms are indeed becoming well-to-do.

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flat left bank, so far away that it was hard to believe that we were on a river at all, and not on some huge lake.

The town became clearer as we swung towards the left and we could see the long lines of wharves. We had come over two thousand kilometres from Gorky and had reached the end of the first stage of our journey. We said good-bye to our fellow-travellers, crossed the landing stage, and climbed the steep road to the station, where we left our luggage. Then, seeing a tram bound for the tractor plant, we jumped on.

After travelling for about twenty minutes, we arrived at the plant, which was surrounded by streets and streets of small white houses, each with its garden full of flowers or vegetables. The factory itself was surrounded by beds and lawns; everything gave the impression of cleanliness and order. We took a stroll by the river and looked at the big house for engineers and specialists, and then returned to the centre of the town, fully ready for breakfast. We went into an hotel, and in spite of the very early hour, were served with a large meal consisting of fried eggs, toast, butter and honey, and a large cup of coffee.

After breakfast we bought our tickets and then wandered round the town until eleven-thirty, when we were due to leave for the south. Once more we were impressed by the cleanliness of the streets, the shops and the people. Stalingrad is a very attractive town, and we were sorry to have to leave it so soon.

Our train for Sochi left at eleven-thirty, and the journey was an experience in itself. In our carriage there were several Red Army men, an old peasant woman, and a woman of about twenty-eight years of age, who smoked innumerable cigarettes. We soon fell into conversation, and, as usual, were fired with questions about England. The old peasant woman listened with great interest and attention to all that was being said, and suddenly broke in.

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'Well, you have not yet had a revolution over there, have you? Look what the Revolution has done for me. I live on a collective farm, my older son is a tractor driver, and my daughter is a leader of the brigade which tends the cattle. My second son is studying in Moscow to be an agronomist. He was sent by our farm. My grandchildren are all having a fine education. I can't read or write myself, too old to learn, I suppose. I tried, but my head does not remember. But I know this—let anyone dare to attack our country,' and she held up a clenched fist, 'and we shall know what to do!'

'Bravo, mother!' said the Red Army men. 'That's the way to speak.'

The younger woman lighted another cigarette and looked at me apologetically. 'Can't stop smoking,' she said. 'I got into the habit when I was thirteen years old, and I cannot get rid of it. I was a waif at that time, with no home, and I slept wherever I could. I belonged to a small band of children and we used to steal at the railway stations. One day we were caught by the police and sent to a home for such children. That was the making of me. Now I am a lecturer in the social sciences and a member of the Communist Party. I am sent to work in the villages, where I teach the history of our Party and of the tremendous growth of the Soviet Union under its leadership. I have just been for a month's stay in a sanatorium on the Volga and am returning to work.'

We were sorry to part with these two women, as they left us at their respective destinations. What a contrast, and yet how typical each was of the results of the Revolution.

The Red Army men were all travelling to various rest homes and sanatoria on the Black Sea. One had been travelling for seven days from Siberia, another had come from the Far East and the third from a region north of Leningrad. They had all received free passes and free rail-

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way tickets and the time spent on actual travelling was not included in their month's holiday. Each of them had interesting stories to tell of their youth and of all that the Soviet Government had done for them.

Before the Revolution, two of them would have remained chained to the soil and doomed to a life of illiteracy and endless unfruitful labour. The third was the son of a crossing sweeper, and he, too, would have had a life of semi-starvation. Now, they had only to choose what they wished to be! While they were in the army, they were continuing their studies and when their term of service was over they would be given the opportunity of studying further or of taking up the profession they had become qualified for while in the army.

Our journey passed most agreeably with such pleasant companions. On the following day we were visited by the chief guard of the train. He had heard that there were foreigners on his train and so came to have a chat with us. He proudly showed us a booklet with the word 'udarnik' inscribed in it. He was a shock worker. His train ran to time and the passengers were made as comfortable as possible. He took us to the coach reserved for mothers with children, where the windows were covered with bright curtains and toys hung over the little tables. The carriage was more like a nursery. We also saw the guard's cabin on each coach, where he slept and where he made tea for the passengers.

As mile after mile of steppe-land slipped by, we began to have a feeling of endlessness! As far as the eye could reach stretched this brownish level plain with scarcely a hillock or hollow on its surface, with here and there a small village, or groups of bullocks or camels plodding along. Only then did we begin to realize what an enormous country is the U.S.S.R.

Towards evening on the second day the scenery began to change, trees appeared and the ground lost its level mono-

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tony. The next morning we awoke to find ourselves running between high pine-clad hills and mountains. We twisted through a narrow valley and in a few hours we caught our first glimpse of the sea—Tuapsé, with its oil pipe-line and its oil tankers, nestling on the shore of the Black Sea, which is no more black than any other sea, but as blue as the Mediterranean.

From Tuapsé the train ran along the very edge of the shore with a high wooded cliff rising on its other side. We stopped at little stations behind which could be seen the white buildings of several rest homes and sanatoria. We had reached the playground of the Soviet workers!

We arrived in Sochi in the afternoon and made our way to the hostel. We followed a very steep lane to the top and found ourselves outside a large two-storied wooden building. Behind the house, in the garden that went down the hill in terraces, were several large tents. The sun beat down with tropical fierceness, and we were very glad to enter the shade of a broad veranda at the back of the house.

We showed our passes, were registered, and were then asked where we would like to sleep, in the house or in a tent. We chose the tent and were given two beds in one of the large ones in the garden. There were eight other beds in the tent, which was open at both ends and quite cool.

We put our things in order, had a shower, and went a little way down the lane, to the dining-room, which was situated on the large veranda of a school. While we ate we could admire the view of the sea and of Sochi which lay below us. We were on one of the highest points of the town, almost at the top of a hill, but the climb from the sea was worth the view of the town below and of the mountains behind the hostel.

After our meal we went down to the sea. Sochi has been called the Soviet Riviera and it resembles the South coast of France in climate and in vegetation. Its buildings, however, are far more beautiful on the whole than those found

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along the coast of the Mediterranean, where the mansions of the rich form a striking contrast to the terrible quarters of the poor. Along the Black Sea coast large new sanatoria rise above the foliage of their parks. Stately new hotels and rest homes line the shores, separated from one another by parks and gardens full of trees and flowers. And everything is for the workers; anyone who works in the Soviet Union has the right to enjoy a holiday in any one of these beautiful places. Millions of rubles are spent yearly by the Soviet Government and trade unions on the building of new resorts and watering places all over the country. The whole coast of the Black Sea is dotted with such places, each more beautiful than the last.

We had a perfect holiday in Sochi. We arranged our time to suit ourselves. Meals could be taken almost when we wished. Breakfast from seven till nine, dinner from one till three, and supper from seven till nine. We rose early and took our breakfast at seven o'clock. After breakfast we usually went down to the beach by way of the fruit market, where we bought a large supply of cherries, peaches, or any other fruit that took our fancy. We sunbathed and swam in the clear water until the sun became too hot to bear. We would then make our way slowly home through the park which ran along the cliff, eat cream ices at the cool dairy, climb our hill and flop on to our beds for an hour or two. After dinner—beach again. Although there were many other attractions, we spent most of our time there.

Towards six o'clock we would make excursions into the town or take a walk across the ridge of hills behind our hostel, or lie on the grass with books and the majestic view of mountains, some snow-capped, in the distance.

The evenings were spent at home, singing or dancing with our fellow visitors, or going with them down to one of the parks to listen to the band or to a good concert.

One day a whole group of Red Army men from Georgia

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put up at our hostel, and the evening was very gay in consequence. We were treated to national dances and songs and ended by joining in ourselves.

During our stay in Sochi we joined in several excursions. These were arranged almost every day for those who wished to join them. We went by boat for the day to Gagri, another beauty spot on the Black Sea, and had a wonderful view as we travelled along the coast. The water was full of dolphins and the ship swayed from side to side as the people ran about in their eagerness to see everything. We returned by moonlight, tired but happy, and songs of all nationalities rose in the air as different groups of people joined in. Another day we climbed a forest-covered mountain not far from Sochi and admired the hundred-year-old redwood trees and others of great value.

All the excursions were led by guides who knew all the interesting points about the places we visited and who did all the work of obtaining tickets, ordering meals, and paying for everything, as these outings were included in the price of our passes. We only had to enjoy ourselves.

We made friends with many people during our holiday, both at our own hostel and in the rest homes and sanatoria near by. In our tent there were eight other girls and women of all types. Almost all had received free passes for twenty days from their work, as premiums. There was a teacher from Leningrad, with whom we exchanged experiences, there were two girls who worked in a big store in Moscow, and they had such a selection of dresses that they sometimes changed several times a day! There was one fine-looking woman with short, dark hair, who assured me that she was forty-five years of age, though she looked ten years younger. She told me her history one day, as we lay on the beach in the sun. She had worked in a textile mill since she was ten years old. When the Revolution broke out she was still doing unskilled work and was completely illiterate.

'And look at me now,' she said proudly. 'I can not only

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read and write, but I have finished a workers' school. I am a buyer now. I am sent by our textile mill to buy materials for our work. I travel all over the place and am trusted with large sums of money. I have a flat where I live with my mother and two children. My husband died many years ago. By the age of thirty I had borne six children, but most of them died, due to the bad conditions we lived in then. There was no care for mothers in those days and children died like flies in our part of the town. Well, those days are gone for ever, so don't let us dwell on them any more.' And she gave us a warm invitation to come and stay with her in Ivanovo any time we wished.

Our remaining companions were a group of students from an engineering institute, who had a very gay time with their fellow men students who had come with them and who slept in a tent a little lower down the garden. They were strong, healthy young people, who swam well and liked to take long walks along the cliffs. They were also very fond of dancing and begged us to teach them the fox-trot in the 'true English fashion'!

We were struck with the perfect planning of the holiday. No-one had to give a thought to the organization of the day. In the rest homes and sanatoria there were hair-dressers, cleaners, and menders, launderers, shoe-cleaners, manicurists—every wish could be satisfied on the premises. Meals were served in a beautiful dining-room, in the grounds were comfortable benches, placed to get the best view. Doctors were in attendance all day, and one was always in residence, and in the sanatoria treatment of every-type of disease was given.

No wonder that people return home looking so fit and sunburnt—all they have to do is to relax and enjoy themselves, to eat good food and keep regular hours—everything else is done for them.

We returned to Moscow brown and rested, and although I have since spent other enjoyable holidays in rest homes,

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I shall never forget my first holiday in the south, nor the friendship of everyone I met. Nor shall I forget how the experience drove home to me more than ever that only in the Soviet Union is such a holiday possible for all, and only a soviet government can provide such enormous sums just for the recreation and rest of its workers.

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It is difficult to give a detailed account of the system of education obtaining in the Soviet Union at the present time, because Soviet education, like everything else in the Soviet Union, is developing at such a rate that many technical points and even the syllabus in some subjects might already be altered by the time this book is in print. A few indications, however, may be given in connection with the events described in the foregoing chapters, in order to make some points clearer to the reader.

There is only one type of Soviet school, the secondary complete (ten years) or incomplete (seven years) school, which is co-educational throughout.

Soviet children begin school at the age of eight, but they are expected to know how to read and count before entering school. This they may learn in the preparatory class which is attached to most kindergartens and to some schools, or they may be taught at home. As Russian is a phonetic language, a child can quickly learn to read, with very little help from an adult, once he knows the alphabet.

Education is compulsory from eight to fifteen, and every pupil must pass through from classes one to seven before leaving school. It is becoming increasingly difficult to find work without a certificate showing that the applicant has completed seven years of schooling. Within the next year or two, when there will be adequate school buildings and teachers, education will be compulsory up till eighteen years of age. Even now any pupil who wishes may continue

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right through to the tenth class as many schools have already been converted into ten-year schools.

Over five hundred new schools, each with a capacity for about a thousand children, have been built in Moscow alone during the last few years. These schools are equipped with every type of apparatus that is considered necessary for each subject. Each school has a cinema apparatus and a magic lantern, with a large collection of slides. Special film libraries have been organized in every district by the local boards of education and films are made in accordance with the syllabus in each subject. A teacher may obtain a film about a theme in history, geography, or any branch of the sciences whenever he needs it to illustrate a lesson. Teachers coming from all parts of the world have never failed to remark on the excellence of the school equipment in the Soviet Union, stating that it was superior to anything they had seen.

Every school has a library, and during the past few years special funds have been given to the schools in order to develop their libraries, and the school reading-rooms are provided with every type of technical and educational magazine and all the daily newspapers. The school librarian has the task of interesting the children in literature and works in close co-operation with the language and literature teachers of the school.

The 'live corner' is another feature of Soviet schools. These are kept not only for the sake of having pets, but as a supplement to the biology teaching. The animals, birds and fish, as well as the plants, are used to illustrate lessons; the children make scientific observations and keep proper records of growth and development, and study theories of breeding and crossing in practice.

The numbers are limited to forty-two children in the lower classes and thirty in the eighth, ninth, and tenth classes. In some cases, due to shortage of school buildings or teachers, there are as many as forty-six or seven in a

class, but the teacher is then paid extra for every child over the maximum in the class. Eventually, when there are enough buildings and teachers, the number throughout will be reduced.

Teachers are paid on the basis of a hundred teaching hours a month in the first four classes, where the same teacher takes all subjects, and seventy-five teaching hours in the upper classes, where teaching is done by specialists in the different subjects. In addition, teachers of languages and mathematics, where there is a lot of marking, are paid forty rubles a month extra for marking books. Class advisers, who have further responsibilities towards the children, are paid a further fifty rubles a month. Any hours beyond the basic number are paid extra, so that a specialist in any subject may thus earn a very good salary indeed. Since the rise by over 100 per cent in teachers' salaries in 1936, teachers earn very good salaries varying from four hundred to a thousand rubles a month.

Soviet education aims at producing an all-round cultured man and woman. The word culture is used in a broad sense to include all the refinements and appreciation for the arts which have come down through the ages, as well as the development of the highest qualities in man. With the rapid development of Soviet industry and agriculture, there is an ever greater demand for highly qualified workers of every description. Further, this development aims at making machines the servants of man, thus giving him more and more leisure time. Education must therefore be for leisure as well as a qualification for work.

The school curriculum must provide for the needs of society, must see that the pupils have a good basic knowledge for becoming highly qualified and, in addition, that they have a good cultural background with which they can enjoy their leisure time. The subjects taught must always have a firm scientific basis in accordance with the principles of Marxist philosophy.

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The sciences must be mastered in order to have an understanding of natural phenomena. Without history no-one can have an understanding of the events taking place in the world to-day, nor realize how the whole structure of present day society came into being. Geography gives a knowledge of physical conditions and, linked with history, shows how physical conditions influenced political growth and caused the world to be in the condition in which it is to-day. The natural sciences, including a study of botany, zoology, physiology, geology, and evolution, give a complete picture of the development of life on the earth and a knowledge of the human body and its functions which helps to create a balanced mind and a healthy attitude towards sex. Children must master their native language and understand its literature, must be able to express themselves well and to understand the rich literary heritage of the past. They should also know foreign languages and their literature, for this helps them to be internationalist in spirit. Sports and gymnastics develop a strong body, and music and art, while helping to understand the development of the arts, also give a means of enjoying the leisure time which is becoming more and more possible for the workers of the Soviet Union.

All these subjects are included in the curriculum of the ten-year school. There are modifications from year to year in the methods of presentation and in the syllabuses of the various subjects. The arranging of the time-table is left to the discretion of the principal and supervisor of each individual school. The syllabuses in every subject are drawn up with a view to the capabilities of the average child and for that reason it is claimed that every child, except the very slow, should be capable of obtaining good marks.

It is impossible to go into detail as to the subjects and syllabuses taught in each class separately, because such things also change very frequently. During my four years

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of teaching in Moscow, many such changes did actually take place. At one time history was begun in class 5 (average age twelve-thirteen), now it is introduced in class 3 (age ten plus). Physics is now introduced in class 6 instead of in class 5. Social science has been dropped out as a separate subject, and a course of study of the Constitution of the U.S.S.R. has been added to the time-table of class 7.

In spite of such changes, the child still gets a complete view of every subject. Let us take history, as an example. In the third and fourth classes the children follow a course of the history of the U.S.S.R. which includes the period of prehistoric man, primitive man, and how he lived in a tribe, the early communities, the period of the early Russian kingdoms, and so up to the formation of the Russian Empire and the coming of the Revolution.

In class 5 a complete course in world history is begun and is continued right through to the last class. This course deals with the early civilizations of Assyria, Babylon, India, Egypt, China, Greece, and Rome, follows the development of feudalism and works up through the centuries, dealing with all the main countries of the world in detail in order of the importance of their development and in the light of their relationship to the rest of the world. By the time a pupil has finished school he has a wide conception of world history and is very well able to judge the events of to-day. I was struck time and time again when talking to older children in the Soviet schools, by their clear ideas and comprehensive knowledge. I often thought of my own confused study of history at school; it was a mixture of dates, kings and their wives, and various wars, the real objects of which I was never taught. And it is the same with the other subjects.

The curriculum is the same in all schools, with slight variations for town and country. No individual principal has the right to change it. The number of hours per week

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per subject is fixed, and each school makes its time-table accordingly, being advised to put the lighter subjects towards the end of the morning.

The convenience of the teachers with respect to hours may be studied only in as far as it does not clash with the interests of the children. If, however, any principal or teacher has any suggestions or ideas about the curriculum, there is plenty of opportunity for these suggestions to be discussed at the numerous meetings and conferences held at different times. If they find general approval, they are sent up to the Commissariat of Education, where there is a special committee which deals with such questions and has the power of incorporating any decisions in the new syllabus of the coming school year.

Changes of this kind have been made in my experience. In fact, it is just by such means that the whole system of education progresses in the Soviet Union. Its being a centralized, unified system enables all those working in it to take an active part in its development.

The Soviet system of education insists that every child go through the complete seven or ten years of schooling. No skipping from one class to another is allowed, except in very special cases. The knowledge gained in one class is of vital importance and is essential in order to be able to follow the subjects of the next class. Children are not allowed to drop subjects, nor are they given a free choice. Every child must cover the whole prescribed course. Soviet educationists consider that children are too young and immature to decide which subjects are necessary to them and that they should follow a course which adults in the light of research on a strict scientific basis, have found to be the best and necessary one. It is the duty of every Soviet teacher to make each subject interesting to the child, so that he is eager to follow it further.

Soviet educationists believe in giving their children a sound academic training, but such a training is nothing if

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not supported by what may be translated as 'the upbringing of the child'—that is, a training of the character and the development of will power, courage, courtesy, together with all the other qualities which go to the making of a balanced person. This 'upbringing' also includes the development of patriotism to the Socialist fatherland, international solidarity with children throughout the world, a hatred of Fascism—in short, everything that will go to the making of a good Soviet citizen. A teacher must be prepared to be an educator and use his lessons not only as a means of imparting academic knowledge, but as a means of educating the child in the qualities I have mentioned.

Every school must have its general 'upbringing' plan, which includes different activities, lectures, discussions, and suggestions to teachers as to how they can carry out their aims through their ordinary lessons, never losing sight of the fact that a lesson must have a double aim—academic and educational, that is, the material studied must be linked up with problems of life itself.

The school staff are helped very much in their general educational work by the Pioneer organization, which exists in every school, as a vital part of school life. The aims of this organization are to help to raise the standard of studies and to strengthen the self-discipline of the pupils. Although membership of the Pioneer organization is purely voluntary, most children aspire to the red tie which is the badge of membership. Only good students are accepted, and this is a great incentive to good work. The Pioneer leaders, through close contact with the staff and by helping the children to pass their spare time in as fruitful a way as possible, do much to forward the training of good characters among them.

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Oral Questions from Yearly Tests



1. (a) What are the characteristics of wheat—where grown, uses, antiquity? Of rye—origin, where grown, uses? Of oats and barley—where grown, uses?
(b) What are the contributions to botany of Linnaeus (explain his main shortcoming), Darwin, Michurin? Where and when did each live?
(*Class 6. Botany. Summer 1937.*)
2. (a) What are the characteristics of lichens?
Describe several kinds under the microscope and an experiment to prove symbiosis. Where are they found and what are their economic uses?
(b) How does hydra reproduce in two ways?
(*Class 6. Botany. Summer 1937.*)
3. (a) Who was Levenbok, what did he discover and why was he important?
(b) What is the source of lime and chalk beds?
(*Class 6. Botany. Summer 1937.*)
4. (a) What are the life habits, the digestive, blood, excretory, nervous, and reproductive systems of the earth worm?
(b) What are the uses of rubber and how is it obtained?
(*Class 6. Botany. Summer 1937.*)
5. The Surface of Europe. Three main types of relief—their composition, average heights. Influence of

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glacial period on the relief of Europe. Volcanic and earthquake regions.

(Class 6. Geography.)

6. *England*. Location—its influence on the importance of England. Political and physical divisions (mountains, highlands, lowlands). Resources. Climate. Agriculture. Types of industry and centres. Significance of waterways to development of England. Type of government. Dependence of England on her colonies (examples). British possessions from London to Sydney.

(Class 6. Geography.)

7. *China*. Political structure. Physical characteristics of Mongolia, Manchuria, Tibet, Sinkiang. Importance of Manchuria to Japan, Region of Soviet China.

(Class 6. Geography.)

8. (a) Genealogy of the horse.
(b) Economic importance of mammals.
Stockbreeding, commercial hunting, wild animal breeding.

(Class 7. Zoology.)

9. (a) Charles Darwin. Constancy of species.
Evolution in the hands of the workers.
(b) Artificial selection. What features may be inherited?
Situation in the past.
(c) Variability in wild animals and plants.
Examples.

(Class 7. Zoology.)

10. (a) Propagation of fish. Spawning. Care of Progeny.
(b) Valuable fish and where they live. Sturgeons, herring, cod, salmon.
(c) Fish breeding.

(Class 7. Zoology.)

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11. (a) Internal structure of insect. Digestive system. Blood system. Breathing. Nervous system. Organs of sense. Genital organs. Muscles.
(b) Propagation and development. Complete and incomplete transformation. Care of the progeny. Sexual dimorphism. Polymorphism.
(Class 7. Zoology.)
12. (a) Struggle for existence among surrounding organisms and between kindred forms.
(b) Examples of adaptation. Five laws of evolution.
(c) Selection in the U.S.S.R. In Soviet plant and animal breeding. Hybrid.
(Class 7. Zoology.)
13. Economic and political conditions of England prior to the Norman Conquest. William the Conqueror. Battle of Hastings. Changes during William's reign—centralization of monarchy, Church reforms, Domesday Book. Arts, sciences and architecture in England during William's reign. Growth of cities and trade.
(Class 7. History.)
14. (a) Peasant revolt of 1381, Causes, Leaders. Progress of revolt, Demands of peasants. Regions of revolt. March on London. Role of King Richard II. Result of revolt.
(b) What were some of the great discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and what were the results of these discoveries?
(Class 7. History.)
15. The Hansa League. Causes for the development of the League. Its extent. Principal cities. Policies of the League. Its inner administration. Wars. Its importance to Germany. Causes of the decline of the League.
(Class 7. History.)

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16. (a) The Renaissance. Humanism, what it is, why it arose and where. Its outstanding leaders. The Church and the Renaissance. Changes in life and ideas due to the Humanist movement.
- (b) What was the role of the Medici? Where and when did they rule?
(Class 7. History.)
17. (a) Spanish and Portuguese conquests in America. Balboa. The discovery of Peru. Cortez in Mexico. Treatment of the Indians. Negro slavery. Significance of the discovery of America to Europe. Influence on trade and commerce. Causes of Spain's stagnation and decline. The Inquisition.
- (b) Who was Thomas Munzer?
(Class 7. History.)
18. Condition of England during the Stuarts. James I and Charles I. Growth of power of the Stuarts. Reign without Parliament. Long Parliament. Activities of Long Parliament. Various groups of Long Parliament. Beginning of Civil War. Cromwell and the Army. Establishment of Republic. Flight of the King. Conflicts between various groups in Parliament. 'The Rump.' Execution of the King.
(Class 7. History.)
19. (a) Soil and vegetation of the U.S.S.R. Tundra and forest regions. Locations. Types of soil. Types of vegetation. Origin of Soil. Relations between soil, climate and vegetation.
- (b) Animals of the Steppe, dry-steppe, desert and sub-tropical regions. Location. Their use in economy. Animal preserves.
- (c) Mineral wealth of the U.S.S.R. Position of the U.S.S.R. in comparison with other countries as to amount of mineral resources. Mineral resources in

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relation to the relief of the U.S.S.R. Location of the useful minerals. Exploitation of the mineral wealth. Recently opened-up fields of useful minerals.

- (d) Northern part of European U.S.S.R. Location, borders, political divisions. Description of surface, rivers, soil, vegetation, climate and resources. Economy. Main cities. Peoples.

(Extracts from Geography syllabus, Class 7.)

20. (a) *Egypt*. Ancient Egypt. Unification of Egypt under Menes. Pharaohs, princes, priests. Life of the peasants. The building of pyramids. Rebellion of peasants and splitting up of Egypt. Conquest of the Hyksos. Expulsion of the Hyksos and the development of Egypt. Egyptian religion. The Temple of Ammon. The religious reforms of Amenophis IV. Later period of Egypt. Conquest of Egypt by Assyria, Persia. Egypt at the time of the Greeks. Egypt under Alexander the Great.

- (b) *Palestine*. (The Israelites—Philistines and Canaanites.) Location of Palestine. The Israelites in Arabia. Legend of Moses. Israelites wander westward. Conflicts with Canaanites, and Philistines. Wanderings in Egypt. Conquest of the country around the River Jordan. King Saul. King David. Unification of Israelite tribes. The height of power of the Israelites. Formation of the Kingdom of Judea. King Solomon. City of Jerusalem.

- (c) *China*. How we know the history of China. Location of the first Chinese civilization. The early life of the people around the rivers Yangtse-Kiang and Whang-ho. Shang dynasty. The Emperor—son of heaven. The princes. The archers. Chinese religion. The age of Confusion. The Tsing. Beginning of struggle against the Chows. Class character of the

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Hang dynasty. Reforms of Hang emperors. Rebellion of the 'Red Brows'. Rebellion of the 'Yellow Turbans'. Conquest of China by the Mongols. Confucius and his teachings.

- (d) ¹Greece. Early Greek Culture. Development of painting, sculpture. Warriors and their equipment. The Olympic Games. The Delphic games.
- (e) ²Sparta. Location. Its political structure. Legend of Luthurgus. Common ownership of land and communal eating. Spartan schools and the army. The Helots. Uprising of the peasants and of the Helots. The Peloponnesian League.
- (f) ¹Greek culture. The theatre. Culture based on slavery. Holidays, Feast of Dionysus. Tragedy and comedy. The Actor. Aristophanes.

(Extracts from History Syllabus, Class 5.)

Extracts from Oral Test Questions, Class 4.

A. Geography.

1. Show the meridians and parallels on the map. Tell how longitude and latitude are found. Find the latitude and longitude of the following: Moscow, Leningrad, Vladivostok, Baku, Archangel.
2. Show on the map the land borders of the Soviet Union.
3. Show the tundra regions of the Soviet Union on the map. Tell about the climate, the vegetable and animal life, and the people of the tundra.
4. Show the desert and dry-steppe regions on the map. What large seas and lakes do you know in these regions? Tell about these seas. Why do these regions have so little rainfall? What has the Soviet power done to bring water to these regions?

¹ Are only sections of the part on Greece.

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5. Show on the map the largest fishing centre in the southern part of the Soviet Union. How would you travel there from Moscow?
6. Show on the map of the world the five chief capitalist countries of the world. Which is the strongest, and why?
7. Show the main colonies and possessions of Great Britain. What do you know of the climate, borders and industries of Great Britain?
8. Where is Italy? Point out Italy's colonies. Why is Italy helping the Fascists in Spain?

B. Natural Science.

1. (a) What are the characteristics of three birds of prey, two insect-eaters, and two grain-eaters?
(b) Why has a dog a muzzle and man a face? Give three reasons.
2. (a) What is the origin of the chicken? How is it useful to man? How do incubators work?
(b) What is the difference between old and young bones?
3. (a) What are the regions of the spinal column? How does a baby get the two curves in its spine?
(b) What are the characteristics of turtles?
4. (a) What are the digestive organs and the main digestive juices?
(b) Compare the bones of the hand with those of the feet.
5. (a) What are the five senses and the main facts about each?
(b) Why is smoking harmful to children?
6. (a) What kinds of teeth have we, how do they change in a child and in a man? How should we care for them?
(b) What is industrial dust, and how is it harmful?

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Extracts from Text Books, etc.

Workers.

The snow is deep on the streets.

But see, the street workers sweep the snow from the streets.

We need not creep.

Our feet will not get wet.

Three cheers for the street workers!

(First Reader, published in Moscow, 1937.)

Autumn tasks on the theme 'Cultivated Plants'.

1. Help with the autumn crops in the vegetable garden, examine the various sorts of cabbage and other vegetables.

2. Make a collection of different sorts of cultivated cereals.

3. Obtain from a state or collective farm samples of new cultivation in your district and newly improved cultivated plants.

(Appendix to *Natural Science*, Pt. II, published in Moscow, 1937.)

Extracts from Natural Science

How Plants are Distributed

1. The summer is over. The corn has been gathered from the fields; it was harvested as soon as the grains had

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ripened in the ears. Nearly all plants—trees, bushes, and herbs—have already blossomed and produced seeds. From these seeds new young plants will grow next year.

Seeds are contained inside the fruit, which developed from the thickened flower pistil after the pollination of the flower.

Seeds can grow only when they fall on warm, damp earth.

We all know how easily ripe apples fall from an apple tree: it is enough to shake the tree slightly for the ripe fruit to fall in a shower. In a few days these apples would very likely have dropped by themselves, especially in windy weather. The same occurs with the wild apples which grow in the woods: in the autumn, under the wild apple trees, we find many little apples which have dropped from them. In the same way and just as easily, juicy fruits and berries drop from the branches when they are ripe.

When such juicy fruits fall to the ground, the soft part of them rots, and the seeds which were inside them fall into the soil straight away and can germinate.

However, we have only a few plants which bear such soft juicy fruits. There are many more plants whose ripened fruit becomes dry and hard. Such are, for example, the fruits of beans, peas, the yellow garden acacia, and the poppy, which we all know. Such dry fruits do not fall to the ground with their seeds. They burst open, and the ripe seeds easily become separated from the dried fruits and fall to the earth.

Because of seeds, plants are able to spread all over the earth. For instance, pine and birch forests grow near Moscow, in Western Europe, and in Siberia. If the seeds had always dropped near their mother-tree, plants would not have been able to spread. They would have stifled each other and perished from overcrowding. However, we find that plants have various ways of spreading their seeds to distant parts of the earth.

New Cultivated Plants

2. Besides those plants which are already being cultivated by our farmers, we are now cultivating new plants.

The Soya Bean. A few years ago not many of us had heard of this plant, although in China and Japan it has been grown for several thousands of years. The soya bean belongs to the ordinary bean family. It blossoms into a whitish flower and its seeds look like beans. It is for the sake of these seeds, which contain a great deal of nourishment, that the soya bean is cultivated.

From the seeds we extract the 'soya milk' which we use in our food. From it we can produce various kinds of food : sour milk, cottage cheese, and other cheese. The seeds are ground into flour from which various confectionery goods are made. From the soya bean the most varied dishes, very little inferior in taste and nourishment to meat, can be made. That is why the soya bean is sometimes called 'vegetable meat'.

The soya bean, therefore, is a very valuable cultivated plant. That is why we began to grow it in our southern districts where it can ripen : in the Ukraine, the Caucasus, and the Crimea. At the end of the first Five-Year Plan period, more than a million hectares had been sown with soya beans.

The Rubber Plants. Rubber (caoutchouc) is obtained from the thick, milky juice of several tropical plants. The juice flows out of the plant if a deep gash is made in it. But in the U.S.S.R. there are no tropical regions and therefore such trees do not grow here.

We had to import all the rubber which we needed for our rubber industry from abroad. For this we paid in gold. We need to have our own Soviet rubber. We need it for making goloshes, rubberized cloth, medical accessories, fire-hose, etc., and chiefly for the manufacture of tyres for automobiles, trucks, motor-cycles, and bicycles. Rubber is also necessary for the manufacture of anti-gas masks and

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rubber, clothing worn as protection against poison gases in war time.

Our scientists began to search for rubber-bearing plants in the vast areas of our country, and in the steppes and foothills of Kazakhstan they found two rubber-bearing plants: the khondrilla and the tausagis. These contain rubber, from which we are already beginning to manufacture rubber wear.

We are already beginning to cultivate various types of this plant rich in rubber.

At the same time, our scientists have invented a method of preparing rubber from ordinary alcohol. This is a great achievement of Soviet science. Factories manufacturing artificial rubber have already been built, and we have our own Soviet rubber.

On the works of I. V. Michurin

The work of our famous horticulturist, Ivan Vladimirovich Michurin, whose name is now well known all over the world, shows what man can attain when he persistently and skilfully tries to conquer nature.

Michurin devoted his entire life to his one beloved hobby. For sixty years he strove to develop new and better kinds of fruit trees and berry bushes. He tried to adapt southern plants to our bleak northern climate and to move them farther to the north where they could not grow before.

For a long time, up to the October Socialist Revolution, Michurin worked alone, having very little money and meeting with no assistance from outside. He had a small fruit garden on the outskirts of Koslov, a quiet provincial town in the central black earth region, and here he carried out his experiments year by year. In this way he raised over a hundred valuable and interesting new kinds of plants.

In Michurin's garden several sorts of real grapes grow

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and ripen. As we know, grapes only grow in the south in our country—in the Caucasus, the Crimea, and Central Asia. In order to make grapes grow in Koslov, Michurin had to cross an American grape with the wild grape from our Far Eastern region. In order to obtain the first-rate 'Crimean' apples in his garden, Michurin crossed the southern apple 'candille' with the Siberian 'kitaika' and obtained a new sort—'candille-kitaika', which had the taste, smell and juiciness of the 'candille' and the cold-resisting properties of the 'kitaika'. In the same way the best varieties of southern pears, peaches, apricots and walnuts were brought farther north.

All these fruits grow in Michurin's garden, and from there they are spread to other gardens and distributed throughout the different regions of the U.S.S.R.

Michurin produced an absolutely new cultivated plant—a remarkably sweet and aromatic berry, 'actinidya', whose wild relations grow in the woods of eastern Asia.

By crossing, Michurin obtained a cross between the cherry and the bird-cherry. Its fruits grow just as thickly as those of the bird-cherry and have the same taste as the garden cherry.

Here we have no room to tell of everything that Michurin obtained in his garden.

The Soviet Government has appreciated the valuable work and achievements of I. V. Michurin. His garden is now an experimental station which carries on and develops his work. Michurin has assistants and pupils.

The Government awarded him the Order of the Red Banner of Labour and has renamed after him his own town where he worked so long and so productively. In the U.S.S.R. there is no longer the town of Koslov, but there is a new town—Michurinsk.

*Fisheries, Fish Breeding**Fisheries*

3. Fish are caught wherever they can be found, but fisheries have an industrial importance in such places where a large amount of fish can be caught in the sea and in the backwaters of large rivers. Here the fish that are caught are further prepared for transport. They are salted, smoked, dried, and pickled or canned. Here, also, the caviare which has been extracted from the fish caught, is salted.

Our fisheries started first of all on the Lower Volga and on our other large rivers. Fishermen had long noticed that, at a certain time of the year, fish which otherwise lived far out at sea gathered in shoals and came in to the mouths of the rivers. They come here to lay their spawn. These fishes are called migratory fish. Among these we can number the Caspian roach, Astrakhan herring, various kinds of sturgeon, salmon, and dog-salmon.

Thus, in the lower part of the large rivers the fish swim straight into prepared nets. The largest amount of fish here are caught in the spring, because nearly all our migrating fish lay their spawn in the spring. It is called the season of the spring shoaling.

The U.S.S.R. holds one of the first places in the world for the amount of fish caught. However, even this tremendous quantity is not enough to feed the population of our country. Therefore, the Soviet Government is taking various measures to increase the catch of fish. Of especial importance is the development of sea fisheries. Before the revolution, sea-fishing was carried out in very primitive ways, from small sailing-boats. At present, improved methods are being used in our seas with the aid of trawls. Trawls are large wide-necked sacks—like nets—which are dragged by a special boat—a trawler. Modern trawlers are real floating factories: they have machines for cutting up

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the fish, for making use of the various waste matter, and for preparing the oil obtained from the fish.

Fish Breeding

Fish-Breeding Factories. A great amount of fish is caught every year in our waters. It is necessary that our fisheries should be correctly managed so that the supply of fish should not decrease. Fishing must be carried on in such a way that the remaining fish multiply and take the place of those which have been caught. Therefore the Soviet Government has issued special laws against the wasteful destruction of fish.

However, not only must we protect our supply of live fish, but we must increase them. For this purpose special fish-breeding factories were organized where the spawn of the more valuable fish is developed.

How do these factories get the fry?

For this purpose the female is caught, dried with a towel and then the spawn is carefully pressed out of her into an enamel pan held in readiness. Then the male is taken, and the sperm-cells (milt) squeezed out of him in the same way. After that the spawn and the milt are mixed with a feather or simply by hand. In this way, the milky liquid of the male reaches all the eggs and the spawn is fertilized.

The fertilized spawn is carefully washed. Then it is placed in a special fish-incubating apparatus which is equipped with flowing water, and the fry hatch out of the eggs.

In artificial fish-breeding, at least seventy small fry are hatched from every hundred fertilized eggs. The fry hatched from this spawn is then put into water. With natural fertilization in the water, most of the eggs remain unfertilized, as the current often carries the milt away with it. Besides, much of the spawn is eaten by animals, and often very little develops.

Fowls

4. *The Origin of the Chicken.* In the hot countries of South-Eastern Asia, in India, Ceylon, on the Sunday Islands, among a thick undergrowth of bushes, even to-day we find wild bantam fowls in whom we can easily recognize the near relatives of our domestic poultry. The wild bantam cock has just such bright plumage as we often see on plain village cocks of no particular breed: a golden neck, reddish back, dark wings, and a burnished metal shine on the sickle-shaped tail-feathers. The wild bantam hen, like our grouse, partridge, and quail, always has a plumage of modest mottled feathers, which hides it amongst the undergrowth. Our domestic hens often have partridge-like plumage. Of all the wild fowls only the bantam cock crows 'kikeriki', and that is another proof that the domestic chicken was bred from wild bantam fowls.

What made the Chicken a Domestic Bird? What valuable qualities did man find in the wild forebears of our domestic fowls and what use did he make of them?

First of all—all fowls are fairly large, fleshy birds, whose meat is edible and tasty. For this reason we hunt our black grouse, wood-grouse, hazel-grouse, partridges, and in the south, pheasants. Domestic hens are also bred because of their meat. Attempts are constantly being made to breed larger, more fleshy sorts. Secondly—wild fowls fly very little, spending nearly all their time on the ground. By training and domesticating the wild bantam fowls, man has been able to use this characteristic for his own ends. Our domestic fowls spend all day looking for food on the ground, and do not try to fly out of the yard. Finally, all fowls are brooding-birds. That means that the fledgelings, on coming out of the egg, are so far developed that they can at once stand on their legs, and will follow the mother hen in whole broods. This we do not find in nesting birds—as, for example, the pigeon or the jackdaw, where the young are born helpless and the parent-birds have to feed

them for a long time. We can easily understand what importance it is for us that the chicken is a brooding-bird and not a nesting bird.

Nesting birds lay comparatively small and few eggs, otherwise the parents would not be able to feed their young. Brooding birds, on the contrary, lay large eggs, for inside each egg there has to develop not a naked, helpless fledgeling but a fairly large and more or less developed creature—the chick. Therefore, as we use eggs for food, birds laying large eggs are of more use to us in our domestic economy.

Fowls not only lay large eggs. They lay whole dozens or even more—as many as the brooding-hen can cover with her body at a time. This is possible with these birds, as the mother does not have to feed her young, and the independence of the young chicks is of great help to her in rearing her large brood. This quality is also very convenient to man when breeding chickens.

If man did not interfere with the life of poultry, the hen, having laid ten to fifteen eggs, would begin to sit on them, as her wild relations do. However, by taking away the eggs, man forces the hen to continue laying and has thus greatly increased the number of eggs (100–150 per year, or even more).

Various Breeds of Chickens. After the chicken has been domesticated, man, by artificial selection, developed many breeds differing from each other in plumage, the shape of the comb, in size, and in other ways.

Of greatest importance to us are those breeds which lay well and are fairly large in size, and at the same time are hardy and suffer little from cold or damp. We find such qualities in the Leghorns, Plymouth Rocks, and Rhode Island breeds. These are the breeds we are trying to cultivate instead of the common village hen.

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What is a Bone Composed Of?

5. The properties of bones do not only depend on their structure, but also on the materials of which they consist. In order to learn the consistence of a bone let us do the following experiments.

Experiment 1. Let us take any bone, for instance the ribs of a large fish. Attach the bone to the end of a wire and hold it over the flame of a spirit lamp. The bone will burn, and turn black and carbon-like. The carbon in it will gradually burn away, and the bone will turn white. Only the non-inflammable parts of the bone are left. This means that a bone contains inflammable organic matter and non-inflammable mineral matter (ash). Let us discover how the properties of the bone have changed after burning. Take the bone out of the flame and let it cool. Now touch it with your hands. The bone will easily break and crumble. The burnt bone is hard and brittle.

Experiment 2. Take another bone (also the ribs of a fish) and place it in a test-tube containing diluted hydrochloric acid. The mineral substances in the bone will dissolve into acid. At the same time bubbles of carbon dioxide will form. Let us leave the bone in the acid for an hour or two, or even until our next lesson.

After soaking for a long time in acid, only the organic matter is left in the bone. Take the bone out of the acid, wash it in water, and test its properties. The soaked bone is soft and flexible; it can be bent and even tied into a knot.

Thus, the hardness and brittleness of a bone depend on the mineral substances contained in it, and the softness and flexibility depend on the organic substances.

The Fight for Clean Fresh Air.

6. Air is of the greatest importance for us. Every day we absorb about 600 litres of oxygen from the surrounding air, and give off nearly as much carbon dioxide. This

changes the composition of the air around us. This we can also feel in ourselves. If we are in a room where there are many people for a long time, and there is no ventilation, it becomes very stuffy, the head begins to ache, and we cannot work. But as soon as we go out of that room into fresh air, we begin to feel better. From this we see how bad stale air is for our organism and what a reviving effect fresh air has on us. Therefore it is necessary to let fresh air constantly into the rooms where we live and work. Both at home and at school, the windows should be opened much more often. Also we should spend as much time as possible in the fresh air.

Dusty air is also bad for the organism. Dust flies in the air. Together with the air we breathe, it enters the lungs, dirtying and irritating them. In some industries industrial dust, coal, cement, metal, tobacco dust, etc., is formed. Particles of dust with sharp edges wound the lungs in breathing. In the struggle against dust, in all factories and workshops, the work-rooms are systematically cleaned, dust-fans are installed, the ventilation is properly arranged, etc.

Dust always contains millions of microbes, amongst them our deadly enemy, the tubercular microbe. On breathing dusty air, the tubercular microbe enters our lungs. So, unnoticed by themselves, human beings catch the dangerous disease, tuberculosis. In the struggle against tuberculosis, first of all we should fight against dust. We have special institutions for curing tuberculosis: tubercular dispensaries and sanatoriums. Before the revolution, there were no such organizations for the workers. They have only been founded by the Soviet Government.

The air we breathe enters the lungs through the nose or the mouth. It is a fact, that when air passes through the nose it becomes better cleansed from dust and microbes. The particles of dust contained in the air stick to the hairs and mucus found in the nose, and therefore the air which

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enters the lungs is already cleaner. Besides that, in passing through the nose, the cold air inhaled becomes warmed and that prevents our breathing organs from becoming chilled. We must make a habit of breathing through the nose. In the struggle for fresh clean air, it is necessary to fight against smoking. Smoking is the same as self-poisoning: tobacco smoke contains a strong poison, nicotine. Nicotine gradually poisons the organism. Smoking is of special harm for children and young people. Smokers harm those around them as well, as they poison the air with the tobacco smoke.

The fight for clean, fresh air is an important problem, for the welfare of the community, especially in large towns and industrial centres, where the air is often spoilt by dust, smoke, etc. In order to fight against the dust, the streets and squares are systematically watered. New parks, squares, and boulevards are being built in order to enlarge the area of vegetation. Green plants in the daylight absorb carbon-dioxide from the air and give off oxygen and in so doing freshen bad air. We must protect our green plants and plant more of them. Schoolchildren can assist very much in this matter. The fight for clean, fresh air is our common task.

Extracts from Zoology, published in Moscow, 1933.

7. Questions for individual study.

(i) Give a short description of animals of the simplest type by answering the following questions:

- (a) Of how many cells does their body consist?
- (b) What are the main parts of the cell to be seen?
- (c) What is the number of nuclei?
- (d) How do they get food and oxygen?
- (e) How do they exude carbonic acid and unnecessary substances?
- (f) How do they propagate?

(ii) What were the first simplest organisms to appear

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on earth—rhizopodes or infusoriae? How can this be found out?

(iii) Why do mosquitoes live in the neighbourhood of marshes and pools, and why is malaria spread in such places?

(iv) Why is not every mosquito bite infectious?

8. How to fight parasite worms.

We have studied only a few parasite worms. Their actual number is very great. They cause great harm to men and animals. Naturally, we fight them.

The most important in this respect are preventive measures, since it is always easier to prevent a calamity than to fight it.

The best preventative measure is cleanliness. The hands must be washed before eating, vegetables should not be eaten without being first washed, since they may have eggs of various parasites which may have got there with manure; pond water should not be drunk since it may contain eggs of parasite worms; pig flesh which has not been stamped at the slaughter house should not be eaten; one must not bite one's nails as the eggs of the pork tape-worms or ascaris may be under them; one must not touch stray dogs and even be wary of one's own as possible spreaders of echinococcus.

Clean pens and troughs are the best means of saving our animals from worms.

9. Practical Study 7. Dissecting a Black Cockroach.

(i) When the cockroach is dissected, we see a narrow longitudinal strip in the middle of the chitin surface (dorsal blood vessel).

(ii) The most apparent thing among the internal organs is a large dark gizzard with an intestine leading from it. In order to examine the whole intestine it must be taken with pincers, carefully drawn aside and smoothed out on the bottom of the bath. The following organs will then be noticeable—masticating stomach, a

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few short, whitish appendices which form the liver, the large intestine, which is darker and thicker, and, behind it, the short rear intestine. A set of thin tubes is seen above the large intestine, the tubes being connected with the latter—these are the Malpighian tubercles, the excretory organ of the insect.

(iii) A number of slices of white fatty substance lie between the organs; that is the insect's stock of nutritive substances. A number of processes, connected with metabolism, occur in the fatty substance.

(iv) After removing the intestine and cleaning the fatty substance, we shall see the nervous system. It consists of a thin, whitish knotted thread lying at the bottom of the abdominal cavity.

(v) The genital organs can be seen in the rearmost section. They look like a whitish mass consisting of tubes and a number of nipples. They are larger in the female than in the male.

(vi) The tracheal system is difficult to examine, since its fine, delicate tubes are easily torn. The two tracheal side tubes are the easiest to examine. They stretch along the abdominal cavity in the form of the finest tubes which run parallel with the nervous system.

10. Expedience in Nature.

Insects are numerous and varied. Their outward appearance, their mode of life and instincts are varied. The most striking feature in their case is their remarkable power of adaptation, or, as we say, expedience.

Religion has long used the expediency of the structure and functions of animal organisms as one of the best proofs of the existence of god. 'See how wisely everything is arranged,' so religion said; 'who else could have created such ants and bees except a supernatural power, a highest intellect, "god"'. The bee feeds on the nectar concealed in the heart of flowers, and therefore its mouth has a long

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proboscis, without which it could not get the nectar hidden in the depth of the crown. The mole-beetle digs deep holes and its forefeet have turned almost into spades. The feet of working bees are provided with special devices for collecting flowers. All the things we see in nature are very well arranged. Who except a higher power, an intelligent god, could have done it all?’

But science has proved that no gods whatever have anything to do with it. These things have not been ‘arranged’ or taken care of by anybody.

Everything which is not adaptable perishes—that is a law of nature. Only the most adaptable can stand the struggle for existence. Every smallest item, every surplus limb in an antenna, every bristle on the body is of importance in this struggle. The butterfly with a colour like that of bark will escape its enemies. But if its colour or design is just a little different from that of bark, the butterfly will perish. Out of many thousands of specimens of the same species of butterfly, only those have won through which, due to the continual variability of all organisms (that can be proved by comparing two butterflies of the same species) have acquired some changes in the colouring of their wings, which changes have made them more similar to bark. They have transferred that feature to their descendants. The selection occurred from generation to generation, the butterflies which were less successfully coloured perished, those whose colouring was more successful lived. The result is a butterfly which cannot be noticed against bark. But that colouring is effective only when the butterfly is sitting on the bark of a special kind of tree. It is only conditionally, or comparatively effective. Should the butterfly land on another kind of tree it will be sighted from afar. Every adapting device is effective only under certain conditions. No sooner are these conditions altered, even in the slightest degree, than the splendid device will prove entirely useless.

11. Natural Selection by Variability and Survival of the Fittest.

Specimens which have, in consequence of variability, acquired even the least advantage over other specimens of that species, will have more chances of preservation and propagation in the struggle for existence. It is no less evident that every change which places the specimen in any worse conditions will lead to the destruction of that specimen. The preservation of useful individual differences or changes and the destruction of harmful ones is called natural selection, or survival of the fittest. The origin of all the various adaptations of plants and animals (or various parts of their organism) to their surroundings, with which we come in constant contact in studying botany and zoology, has a very clear scientific explanation, based on variability, heredity, and natural selection of the fittest. The protective colouring and form of animals—mimicry, the mutual adaptation of flowers and insects to cross pollination, the fact of some animals' winter coma, the capacity of restoring lost parts of the body, the production of a great number of eggs by organisms whose embryos are subject to extensive destruction—these and all the other numerous expedient adaptations of organisms which we know of, all acquire, thus, a perfectly natural explanation.

The expedience of structure of organisms is the consequence of natural laws, which act unfailingly and constantly. The real scientific explanation of evolution in nature has deprived the church of one of its most powerful weapons, which it used in order to blind the intellect by fairy tales about god, his wisdom and power. Against the senseless wonder before 'the wisdom of the almighty, who created nature in the best way' science sets off a definite and clear scientific explanation. As a consequence of natural selection, the vegetable and animal species constantly change in the sense of an ever greater adaptation to the conditions of existence. It is now clear to us why the

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elementary unit of biological classification—the species—is not constant, not invariable. Every species is more or less variable and produces varieties; the varieties transmit their features to the progeny, due to heredity, and natural selection detects and stabilizes the features which give some of the species an advantage in the struggle for existence. Whole varieties were formerly regarded as accidental deviations from the typical species, but we now understand that varieties are the beginning of new species.

We can now shortly formulate the basic principles of the theory of evolution as follows:

(i) Specimens of every species are variable and, consequently, all of them differ from each other by some peculiar features.

(ii) Every organism has to carry on a constant struggle for existence with the elemental forces of nature and surrounding organisms.

(iii) As a result of the struggle for existence, the fittest specimens survive, a natural selection occurs.

(iv) Useful hereditary features which resulted in a greater adaptability, and, therefore, gave certain specimens the victory in the struggle for existence, are transmitted to the following generations and stabilized in them (heredity).

(v) The varieties, resulting from natural selection, are the origin of new species.

Selection and its Importance.

A knowledge of the basic laws of development of organisms is of enormous importance in farming. Ascertaining useful hereditary features in domestic animals and cultivated plants and their transmission to following generations by crossing and selection are the fundamental principles of improvement of animal breeds and plant species.

We already know that selection is the basis of this improvement. But it is clear that artificial selection will not

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yield any results, if the useful features of the organisms selected for crossing are not hereditary. No matter what selection is done, we shall not get the desired results—a new breed. Therefore, we must, first of all, be able to distinguish hereditary features from non-hereditary. In former times, for example, attempts were made to get these new features by means of feeding, training, etc., and we know that such features are not hereditary and cannot, therefore, form a basis for selection. And even useful features, which arise without human interference, are not always stable. It is evident that, in the absence of knowledge of the exact laws of variability and heredity, selection demanded large intervals of time and a great number of attempts, of which many were unsuccessful. Even in cases where an economically useful hereditary feature was found, the results were not always successful. It often happens that a hereditary feature detected in the parents seems to disappear in their immediate offspring and reappears again in later generations only. Former stockbreeders and plant cultivators, judging in such cases by the first generation, usually thought they had selected the hereditary feature unsuccessfully and abandoned the attempt, which could, however, bring good results. It is true that during long practice of stockbreeding and plant cultivation, many facts were accumulated which served as foundation for selection in stockbreeding and plant cultivation.

We know that Darwin, in building his theory of evolution, based it on this practice. However, scientifically organized artificial selection, based on the science of hereditary and variability, began rapidly developing only recently, from the beginning of this century. The theory of selection came from the practice of selection, and practical selection based on that theory, resulted in enormous achievements. The importance of selection in plant cultivation and stockbreeding grows from year to year.

Nowhere has selection such wide prospects as in the

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U.S.S.R. A large number of animals are needed for mass selection work, especially in stockbreeding. More than that, selectional work can be effected without obstacles only on the condition that it is not limited by commercial competition between various farms, which conceal their methods from each other: this is unavoidable under the conditions of privately owned capitalist farms. The organization of stockbreeding and plant cultivating state farms and the collectivization of farming and trades, have opened such prospects for planned selectional work in this country, which no capitalist state can even dream of.

V. I. Lenin attached tremendous importance to selectional work. As early as the famine year of 1921, in connection with the struggle against droughts, he gave his special attention to cultivating drought-resisting cereals. He thereby gave a great impulse to the development and extension of selectionary work. The few institutions for cultivating new kinds of plants—selection stations which existed at that time—were immediately expanded. The number of such stations was increased. The Union now has a wide network of institutions for the selection of plants and animals, and they are doing important scientific and practical work. What are the achievements of our selection stations and what problems does Soviet selection solve?

Here are some examples of Soviet selection. Sunflower plantations suffer a great deal from a parasitic plant—*orobanche*¹—which clings by its roots to those of the sunflower. There are cases when the parasite completely destroys the crops of these valuable oil-bearing plants in an entire region. A kind of sunflower has been cultivated at the Saratov selection station which withstands contamination and, moreover, yields 40 per cent more crop than the common sunflower. A number of drought-resisting kinds of cereals have been grown there too. There

¹ In Russian: *zarazikha*, which means contaminated.

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is a very interesting new plant which was grown at the same station by crossing rye and wheat—the rye-wheat hybrid.¹ The rye-wheat combines the resisting quality of rye with the advantages of wheat as regards quality, and we are beginning to introduce it in our farming.

The problem of obtaining frost-resisting cereals is also being successfully solved. Experiments in crossing wheat and quitch (a wild cereal) are very important in this respect. As a result of these experiments we are on the way to obtaining a variety of wheat which will be as frost-resisting as the quitch and, perhaps, also perennial.

Drought- and frost-resisting kinds of cereals and other plants have been introduced in areas which until now were barred to farming, due to the climate or soil conditions. Such kinds of agricultural plants are of a particular importance to new industrial areas, situated in a cold or dry climate (Khibines, Ural, Kuznetz Basin, Stalingrad, etc.).

The new selected seeds gradually replace the common seeds which had been used. It is planned in the next few years to replace completely common seeds by selected seeds for the sunflower, winter and spring wheat, oats and corn, and no less than 50 per cent for rye and barley. The same will be done for flax. As regards common kinds of potatoes they are already gradually being replaced by selected ones which contain more starch and yield better.

The achievements of Michurin in selectional work have played an enormous part in the cultivation of improved kinds of fruit trees. He cultivated by various means over two hundred kinds of vegetables, fruit and decorative plants of very good quality, resisting the climate of our middle zone. For example, he obtained a grape vine which stands our winter frosts, early melons, new kinds of raspberries, cherries, plums, etc. Michurin's small nursery (near the town of Michurinsk, formerly Kozlov, Central

¹ Hybrids are the progeny of organisms differing from each other in some hereditary features.

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Black Earth Region) has been turned into a large institution of scientific selection. The varieties obtained there are beginning to spread in state and collective vegetable farms.

We have made no less progress in improving domestic animal breeds. Stockbreeding in this country was a backward branch of economy and extensive work is now being done in this branch. One of the main problems of stockbreeding is to replace our common cattle and poultry by highly productive breeds, i.e. such breeds as will yield a great deal of meat, milk, wool, eggs, etc. In the course of a few years, the best of our Soviet farms have already bred by crossing common cattle with thoroughbred males, some breeds which yield three and four times more meat than common cattle; pigs have been bred having treble the weight of common pigs, and cows yielding 6,000 tankards of milk (measure used in Russia) yearly and even more. Breeds are formed which are particularly fecund, resist sickness, various climatic conditions, etc.

More than that, by crossing various species, closely related to each other, we sometimes succeed in breeding an entirely new species of domestic animal. For example, in Middle Asia, bulls of the local breeds have been crossed with female yaks. This crossing will produce in our cattle, after the necessary selection is effected in the course of some generations, great endurance, a better hide, higher quality meat. Extensive work is done in this line, under the direction of the Central Stockbreeding Institute.

Things which demand a long time in capitalist countries are accomplished here, under the conditions of planned economy, in a few years.

Thus we see that man, in the course of his economic activity, has created and is creating new breeds, varieties and even species of animals and plants. The practice of plant cultivation and stockbreeding is a complete refutation of the religious doctrine about the invariability of vegetable and animal forms.

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Extracts from Anatomy and Physiology of Man (published in Moscow, 1934)

12. The Origin of Knowledge of the Structure and Work of the Human Organism.

In olden times attempts to cure diseases were hardly anything but quackery. Quackery still exists in remote parts of our Union. The first 'physicians' were priests. The ailing, seeking relief from their pains, came flocking to the temples from all parts of the country. In addition to sacrifices and exhortations the priests began little by little to use other methods in curing the sick. Through autopsies of animals undertaken in connection with immolations and the observation of the multitude of ailing people, the priests gradually obtained a certain knowledge of the structure and vital activity of the bodies of higher animals and man. Medicine remained long in the hands of priests. Over two thousand three hundred years ago, when medical science had already reached a comparatively high degree of development, there lived in Greece a famous physician, Hyppocratus, known up to our times as the 'father of medicine'. His writings contain, besides information on the medical art, a certain primitive knowledge of anatomy and physiology. However, he too connected his medical activity with his service to the god Aesculapius.

The more medicine was freed from the influence of priests and became independent, the more physicians understood the necessity of studying not only the structure but also the activities of the human organism. Having noticed the great resemblance between the structure of higher animals and that of human beings, physicians began to dissect living animals in order to watch the functions of different parts of their body. The Roman physician, Galenus, who lived about five hundred years after Hyppocratus, experimented on animals, operating on monkeys, whom he called 'a ludicrous copy of man'. In his writings

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he definitely stated that the science of diseases must be founded on the knowledge of anatomy and physiology.

However, further progress in anatomy and physiology was stopped for a long time, in the Middle Ages, when all study of nature, in particular the study of the structure and activity of the human and animal organism was prohibited by the church. Whoever dared to experiment on animals or make autopsies of dead human bodies was considered an apostate, accused of practising witchcraft, severely punished, and even burnt at the stake.

Only towards the end of the Middle Ages were anatomy and physiology again granted the right of existence. The necessity of accumulating knowledge of the structure and activity of the human organism forced the leaders of the Church to desist from further persecution of autopsies.

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the knowledge of the structure of the human body made quick strides. Physiology was also greatly developed. However, only in the nineteenth century, in connection with great developments in chemistry and physics, did physiology achieve considerable success. This is due to the fact that without knowledge of physics and chemistry it is impossible to understand correctly the processes taking place in an organism. Only due to the achievements of these two sciences was it made possible to understand the physical and chemical nature of physiological processes and thus to obtain a deeper insight into them.

The more our knowledge of physics and chemistry grew the more it became clear that no impassable wall existed between animate and inanimate nature. It was established that many organic substances, produced in connection with vital processes of the body, can be obtained in laboratories from inorganic matter. It was established also that fundamental laws of nature, such as for instance the law of conservation of matter and energy, equally regulate both animate and inanimate nature. Physical and chemical

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analysis of the vital processes taking place in organisms, cleared away many a reason for the belief in a special unknown and incognizable 'vital force' which supposedly regulated the activities of an organism. However, this idealistic conception closely connected with religion, is still widely spread among bourgeois physiologists.

While trying to explain life's phenomena without the help of the 'vital force', or the soul, many scientists attempted to explain all these phenomena as chemical and physical processes. In other words they tried to prove that no difference existed between the phenomena of life and those of inanimate nature. For instance, they tried to explain the activity of the kidneys, producing urine, as a simple filtration process; the absorption of food in the intestines as exclusively physical and chemical processes, such as diffusion, osmosis, etc.

However, a deeper knowledge of physiology proved that such a simplified conception of vital processes is grossly erroneous, and only serves to obscure our understanding of the specific nature of the phenomena of life. There still exist scientists who either try to explain the phenomena of life by help of the 'vital force', or by reducing these phenomena to physical and chemical processes. However, both groups are equally wrong. In determining nature's general laws, science must establish the specific nature of the given group, setting it apart from other groups. The main aim of anatomy and physiology is not to explain all processes of life as physical and chemical phenomena, but to understand the natural laws exclusively inherent in the processes of life and regulating these latter only. However, these physiological laws have nothing in common with supernatural unrecognizable forces such as the soul or the 'vital force'.

13. Puberty.

Between twelve and fourteen years of age the so-called

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period of puberty begins. During this period the activity and playfulness characteristic to a child of the first few school years somewhat subsides. Attention becomes more staid. Perseverance develops.

Towards this time the skeleton has already become stronger. The ossification of cartilages proceeds more rapidly. If distortion appears in connection with the wrong sitting posture of the body, it is harder to correct it. The strength of muscles and the preciseness of movements increase.

At that time growth quickens so that sometimes the development of the thorax cannot keep pace and children become narrow-chested. The heart grows too, and the net of blood vessels increases. At that time a disparity between the size of the heart and the width of arteries appears. Arteries lag behind the heart in their development, they are too narrow. The heart has to contract with much greater force in order to push the blood along the narrowed arterial path.

The heart takes an important part in every physical effort. Since at the age of puberty the heart has to work under unfavourable conditions, care must be taken not to overstrain it by excessive physical work, so as not to cause a dilation of the heart and a disturbance of its activity.

The activity of glands of internal secretion undergoes radical changes. While the thymus gland becomes atrophied and degenerates into fatty tissues, the sexual glands, on the other hand, begin to develop noticeably, and new hormones appear in the blood. In connection with the development and strengthening of the activity of the sexual glands, the so-called secondary sexual characteristics develop, that is the characteristics which distinguish a grown-up person from a child: the voice changes, hair appears on the face, the shape of the body changes, etc. The hormones of sexual glands as we already know, strongly influence the whole vital activity of the organism.

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The period of puberty lasts several years; the different organs of the human body do not become mature at the same times. For instance, the brain reaches its full weight at the age of twenty to thirty years. The vertebrae complete their development at the age of twenty-five. Usually people are considered mature at the age of twenty to twenty-two, or even later. Towards that time the organism becomes stable and the vital activity of all the organs and tissues proceeds normally.

At that time the organism can be considered mature enough to fulfil the functions of propagation. Propagation is one of the most basic functions of all living beings, including man. Sexual life is the manifestation of the instinct which contributes to the continuation of the species. But the behaviour of man is directed not by instincts, but by his consciousness, which is determined by the social environment. We have to approach problems of sexual life consciously. We must remember that these problems are of the greatest importance for society. Soviet public opinion is fully interested in the correct solving of these problems.

The upbuilding of socialism requires that every one of us takes active part in the creation of a healthy new generation. Our children shall grow up to be strong and healthy. One of the most necessary prerequisites for this is the health and complete physical development of the parents. Only healthy parents can give a healthy progeny, a new generation of strong builders of communism.

An early beginning of sexual life is unhealthy from a physiological point of view. It wears out the organism prematurely. From a social point of view early sexual life is also harmful. It cannot bring a healthy strong posterity, and makes people weak-willed and strangers to the spirit of collectivism.

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Extracts from History—Pre-class Society (published in Moscow, 1933)

14. The Descent of Man.

Popes, rabbis, mullahs, and priests of all other religions, teach that all the world, all the animals, plants, and man, were created by God. Science examined these statements and found out that they were all fables, that they do not contain a single word of truth, that no gods ever existed in reality, and that the world, earth, plants, animals, and man, arose not in a miraculous but in an absolutely natural manner.

Archaeologists discovered in ancient layers of the earth bones and whole skeletons of primitive man and species of animals now long extinct. These bones and skeletons show first of all when the first man appeared on the earth, secondly how he appeared, and thirdly how the human species changed from their primitive to their present stage of development.

The oldest remnant of man is a lower jaw found near the German town of Heidelberg (the jaw is therefore called the Heidelberg jaw). The jaw was found at a depth of twenty-five metres below the surface of the ground. This made the scientists come to the conclusion that it had taken about two hundred to three hundred thousand years for the earth to accumulate so many metres. Man, therefore, has existed on the earth for not less than three hundred thousand years.

Whole skeletons and many separate bones of people living later, in the period of between one hundred and fifty to fifty thousand years before our times were subsequently found in various parts of Europe. The scientists call the human species or race that then existed the Neanderthal race from the name of the valley of Neanderthal near the German town of Dusseldorf where the bones of this species (race) were first found. Human skeletons found in the higher strata of the earth (about fifty to twenty thousand

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years before our day) are already more like the present species of man.

15. The Appearance of Inequality and Private Property.

A certain inequality amongst some of the agricultural and cattle-breeding communes had already arisen from the beginning. Not all the families were equal in the number of their members; some had more man-power, some less. At one time this was not so important a difference, since a smaller family demanded less means of existence; but it became immediately marked when in addition other differences arose.

When a territory cleared up for tillage by a family union was partitioned among separate families, it was never possible to divide it so that all families would have portions of equal quality. The difference in the quality of the soil quickly told on the quantity and quality of the harvest, and the quantity of the surplus product. When a junior branch separated from the expanding family it usually received a portion of the undivided land supply, and the soil of the land was always of lower quality. The new family, always being weaker in numbers, at the same time received the worst tillage. The family agricultural communes therefore gradually divided into richer and stronger and poorer and weaker communes. When the harvest was bad or some other misfortune, such as sickness, murrain or attacks of the cattle-breeders befell a weak commune, it sometimes went entirely to pieces. Its members joined other communes where they were received as strangers, without the vote or the right to the common property, but forced to toil for their daily bread. The same differences arose among the cattle-breeding families; the pastures given to different families could also never be equal in quality. Some pastures were nearer to lakes and rivers and others farther away; the grass was consequently better in one area and worse in another. In some communes, therefore, the cattle fed and

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bred better, were stronger and healthier than in others, where they were small and weak. When a new family arose, separating from an expanded family group, the cattle given out to it were usually young and worse in quality, and the pastures somewhere on the border where the danger of attacks from neighbouring families was greater. Thus richer and stronger, and poorer and weaker families arose among the cattle-breeders as well.

The beginning of exchange strengthened the inequality among families; only such families could exchange which had a surplus product. Weak and poor cattle-breeding families could not provide themselves with a sufficient quantity of bread: weak and poor agricultural families could not procure enough wool and woollen things.

With the appearance of bronze tools, this inequality rapidly increased. Stone could be found everywhere, and stone tools could be made equally well everywhere, whereas copper and tin were not universally found. Therefore bronze tools could not be made in all places. Family communes finding copper and tin immediately became richer and stronger than their neighbours. They grew richer because the use of bronze tools in production increased and improved it. They grew stronger because bronze weapons, bronze-tipped arrows and spears, and real swords and daggers gave them a much greater advantage in war. But this was not all: copper, tin, and bronze tools immediately became very expensive goods. Trade in them enriched those family communes which had supplies of copper and tin.

Moreover, the appearance of bronze technique in family communes increased the inequality among the members of the commune. Some inequality among them had existed before. It depended on the fact that the family rulers and leaders were receiving the best and slightly larger part of the common product as compared to the product received by other, ordinary members of the family. This inequality now developed rapidly. In those communes which had to

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buy copper, tin, and bronze objects, only those members of the commune were able to do so who had some surplus product. It was the family rulers and leaders primarily who had this surplus. They therefore could buy, and did buy, their own food and weapons. Having bronze axes, sickles and scythes, and ploughs with bronze shares at their disposal, the rulers and leaders began to demand a greater share in the distribution of the common product. Being armed with bronze swords, spears, and arrows, they could at any moment support their demands by main force. Thus appeared rich and poor members of the family, besides the existence of rich and poor families. The oldest members of the family became the rich and the younger members and strangers formed the poor.

16. Totemistic Religion.

Magic is not yet real religion because it does not comprise the belief in supernatural beings, gods, and spirits, but religion is narrowly connected with magic.

Religion also appeared as the result of the wrong ideas of the primitive hunters about themselves and surrounding nature. It began by the attempts of the hunters to invoke the help of animals during the hunt. Experience showed animals as being very often stronger and shrewder than man. Animals run faster than man, slip through places impassable for man, have a sharper sight and ear, detect different smells from afar, especially the smell of man. Wild beasts do not need weapons, having strong feet and claws and sometimes horns, whilst a snake kills man by a single sting. Birds fly, frogs and fish live in the water: all this is impossible for man. All these attributes seemed miraculous and holy to the primitive hunters. The primitive hunters therefore turned to the animals with their prayers for help and protection.

The worship of animals or the cult of animals was the first form of religion. It first formed and took definite shape

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in totemistic society. Totems were usually called after different animals, more rarely after plants. The animal after which the totem was called was considered the god protector of the totem. It could not be killed, and prayers for help were addressed to it. The cult of animals was in full force among the Australians when travellers first got acquainted with them. The Australians believed that the animal god heard the prayers of man and granted them. The members of the totem of the kangaroo were, for instance, sure that when they went hunting the kangaroo followed them at a certain distance, shouting at the coming danger. Similar things are said about other totemistic gods by members of other totems.

Members of other totems, moreover, believed that the ancestors from whom they had sprung were their totemistic animals or people resembling totemistic animals. Some Australian tribes, for instance, believe that both the members of the totem and the totemistic animal descend from half-men, half-beasts. Such beliefs formerly existed everywhere and still exist among some peoples in the Soviet Union.